Enthusiastically received on

THE MIDLAND B.B.C.

THE FOUR LIVES OF ELSBETH ROSENFELD

AS TOLD BY HER TO THE B.B.C.

With an introduction by

Dr. JAMES PARKES

DJClark
20/5/64

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Few broadcasts have been so enthusiastically received as the twenty-three episodes from her life-story that Dr. Elsbeth Rosenfeld broadcast, with the title *An Old Lady Remembers*, on the Midland B.B.C. during the summer of 1963. The rumour of them rapidly spread through the country, and there has been an insistent demand for their publication.

Dr. James Parkes, who contributes a lengthy introduction, writes as follows:

"Elsbeth Rosenfeld is a very unusual person who has had a still more unusual life. For she is a Christian who deliberately registered herself as a Jewess in Nazi Germany, and survived.

" Born the eldest child of a Jewish father and a Christian mother, she was brought up as a Christian in the Berlin of imperial Germany during the last decades before the First World War. Her father was a beloved doctor in one of the poorer sections of Berlin, and, from her early days, he made Elsbeth a companion in his healing work, an experience which shaped the whole of her life and character.

" She took up social work herself in the Weimar Republic, and continued it after she married her husband, himself a Jew, in 1920. He was a member of the Prussian Parliament, and an official of the Prussian Ministry of Justice until 1933, and they were active members of the Social Democratic Party until Hitler.

" Under Nazi legislation she was classed as a 'non-Aryan', while her husband, as a pure Jew and a state civil servant, was immediately retired. They moved from Berlin to Bavaria, where they had previously spent many holidays and knew many peasants. But the Nazis forced them to move from place to place until life anywhere became more and more difficult. In the Spring of 1939 they were able to send the children to England, and they prepared to

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AS TOLD BY HER
TO THE BBC

with a foreword by
JAMES PARKES

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1964

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To
CHARLES PARKER
IRENE BAILEY
PAT SHORT
who made the broadcasts possible
with
affection and gratitude

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FOREWORD

In April and May, 1963, Midland listeners to the BBC heard a series of twenty-three broadcasts in which Elsbeth Rosenfeld told the story of her life—her "four lives"—to Charles Parker. This book is substantially based on those broadcasts, including sometimes material which had to be omitted because of time, filling out sometimes episodes which were only lightly touched on.

The book makes as few changes as possible, but something is inevitably lost when live speech passes into the pages of a book. Phrases and turns of language which are vivid when spoken become obscure or just "quaint" when read. So some pruning has been necessary, but there has been no attempt to turn an educated German into an Oxford Englishwoman! In the broadcasts her name was always given as Else, and it is as Else that she is known. But English readers might take it as a monosyllable, if they did not hear it pronounced, so that it is rendered by her baptismal name of Elsbeth in the title. But she will henceforth be called Else in the book also, and the name is pronounced as though it were spelt *Elza*.

There is no better way to introduce the subject to the reader than to use the actual words with which Charles Parker prepared the listener. Here they are:

Announcement: Tonight, and for the next five weeks, Else Rosenfeld will be telling the story of her life from early childhood in the Berlin of the 1890's to the Munich Ghetto from which, after two years underground in Germany, she finally escaped to Switzerland in 1944. This morning the Producer, Charles Parker, introduces the series.

Charles Parker: Else Rosenfeld is now seventy-two. I met her first a year ago to discuss the dramatising of a book she had written about her experiences in Nazi Germany. She began to tell me her story in her own words, and hearing that cool, controlled voice I at once realised that this was

the way it should be heard on the air and there and then began the series of recordings from which these programmes have been compiled. For no dramatisation could achieve this immediacy, this authenticity of ordinariness which makes her story so compelling—and so salutary for us today who are in danger of forgetting.

Tape 12c insert into introduction: In September '41 we had to wear the so-called Jewish Star. You know, going through the streets of Munich wearing the sign of a pariah was extremely difficult. Our faces were like stones. I had my nose high in the air to avoid looking at people. It was a terrible thing, and I still sometimes do it—find myself in the streets of Birmingham looking through people instead of at them.

Charles Parker: To sit in a quiet room, in a prosaic suburban house in Acocks Green, Birmingham, and listen to words like these is a dangerous privilege. For here, in the person of this quiet, comely old lady, is a reality we might think it better to avoid. It is one thing to shudder, as we've done these past twenty years, at accounts of Gestapo and Concentration Camp horrors which yet, all too often, remain melodramatically remote. It's quite another to come face to face with one who lived under their shadow as an act of deliberate choice—Else Rosenfeld was a Christian who chose to identify herself with the Jews.

Tape 12a: I wanted to be on the side of the Jews, to be with them. It wasn't easy to do that, being only half-Jewish and a Lutheran from birth, because, till after November '38, you could be a Jew only when you were in the Jewish Religious Community. I was a Christian. I didn't want to change my belief. On the other hand some of the Jewish people in Munich where I was then, were very orthodox, and wouldn't take me to work for them. So I went to a very liberal, broadminded Rabbi in Berlin. He said, "I give you a certificate that you are one of our own Jewish Community" and they took me in.

I think it was a sort of real wish to fight against injustice, to help people who suffered unjustly. It wasn't much I could do, but at least I wanted to do this. You know, the fact that I, of my own free will, could choose where to stand, helped me to be firm against the Nazis.

The extraordinary and terrible experience of those years Else Rosenfeld has told in a book which has appeared in Germany and Switzerland, but has not been translated into English. *I Chose Where to Stand* was the title she originally gave it. But this did not seem sufficiently dramatic to the Swiss publisher who first brought it out. He changed the title to *Verfemt und Verfolgt* (*Outlaw and Fugitive*). The German publisher was persuaded to change it more to what Else wanted; and as at that time she was emphasising that there were many Germans who stood by the Jews in their distress, she chose the title *Ich stand nicht allein* (*I did not Stand Alone*). Even so neither edition tells the full story. In both there was the sub-title *Experiences of a Jewess under the Nazis*. But here for the first time, the story is put into its true perspective as part of a long life of Christian social work. *Else was not a Jewess, except by her own choice.* She was a non-Aryan Christian. She did in actual reality what the young Jesuit does in the fiction of Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Representative*; she herself voluntarily pinned the Yellow Star on her breast. That actual piece of coarse yellow cloth is now preserved in the Parkes Library, where Else is every year an honoured visitor. For by a miracle she survived the Nazis and rejoined her family in England after the war.

It was in her daughter's home in Acocks Green, Birmingham, that Charles Parker first heard her story. He introduced a tape-recorder into the room almost without Else noticing. It was the sensitive sympathy of Charles and his assistant, Irene Bailey, which so managed it that they never broke the thread of what "an old lady remembered"—the words with which they introduced each broadcast. To this day Else does not remember half she said, or the songs or hymns which Charles persuaded her to sing, and which he used to begin each episode. The tapes, as recorded, were passed to Pat Short, who edited and prepared them for broadcasting from the iron lung in which polio has compelled her to live.

The book has spoken of the *four* lives of Elsbeth Rosenfeld in order to emphasise the contrasts which occurred in the *life* of a single person—not merely in her *lifetime.* She grew up to academic and social involvement in Berlin when it was still the capital of imperial Germany. In the Weimar Republic she

and her husband lived an active and honoured political life. Then came the terrible years of the Nazis. Immediately they involved personal humiliation and extrusion from the personal, social and political activities to which they were accustomed. From 1939 Else, separated from her husband and family, lived as a Jewess in the Ghetto of Munich or in hiding from the Nazis, till she escaped over the Swiss frontier. Then comes that which makes her story tragically near to a unique record: the reunion with her husband and family after the war, the pension from the Bonn Government, the building of a new home in the Bavarian village which she loved, and the return to activity in all kinds of unexpected fields. All this Charles Parker recorded with the telling reminder that it is actually what an old lady remembered from her own life story.

December 3rd, 1963. J. P.

ONE

A BERLIN CHILDHOOD

I WAS BORN IN Berlin in 1891; my father was Friedrich Behrend, a young Jewish doctor, my mother a Christian from a very exclusive Berlin home. Her parents were very wealthy and they were not at all delighted when their only daughter wanted to marry this unknown Jewish doctor. At first they didn't give in to her, and at that time in Germany a girl had to be twenty-four before she was allowed to take her own decision. She was just twenty-one and wanted to marry at once—she was not happy at home—so my grandparents made quite a number of conditions and then gave in reluctantly.

My mother had been told they were allowed to marry only if her children would be brought up as Christians. My father was quite liberally minded—not at all religious—so that didn't matter very much to him; ethics were much more important to him than religion. So they married and I was the first-born child. I have seven sisters and brothers and we were all brought up as Lutherans.

My mother often told me of her wedding day. It must have been very difficult for her, for her people did not like the idea of a Christian marrying a Jew, even if the Jew would be baptized, and my father insisted that he would not be baptized, even though it meant that my mother was disinherited. My mother's parents would have nothing to do with us, though I saw my grandmother once, just before she died, when she wished to be reconciled. But my mother has told me that when her father told her at once after the marriage that she was not his daughter any more, my father's mother at once took her in her arms and said, "You are one of my daughters and you shall always look on me as your mother. Let's go home now, for we wish to celebrate your wedding and your coming into our family." Her story always ended with her telling me how warmly all my father's family welcomed her, and what wonderful things

they had prepared to make her feel at home, so that she felt that she had gained more than she had lost.

My left arm is at least half lame. It was a birth injury and the upper half of the arm is quite lame and the lower half is only partly movable. And I remember when the doctor told me as a small child that because of my arm I would never marry. I think he meant it as a joke, but I took it seriously. From that time onwards I always thought I would lead a very, very dull life. During the first years of my childhood I remember that I had to have massage and exercises every day, and all this sort of thing which children don't love. But it was necessary to do it, and I did it. On the other hand, I could do much more with my right hand than other children and other people can. My father didn't think it was a good thing to get pitied by people, and he told me very early: "When people say to you, 'Let me do that for you, because you can't,' then tell them, 'Don't say that. Please give me time to find my own way to do it,' and then you will find out you can do it yourself." And that helped me enormously. I always found a way to do it myself.

In later days, you know, I could always bathe my babies and cook all the meals for the family if necessary, in spite of my bad arm. The only thing was that I had to do it in my own way, not copy other people. I just had to find out a method, and that I always succeeded in doing. I don't think I was ever defeated because of it. At school I was not allowed to take part in gymnastics. But I was a very lively child and did not like that very much. Again my father stepped in, and I think that his advice was very good. He said to me: "Look here; in my medical practice I find that, up to the time when they have lessons in gymnastics, children never hurt themselves very much when they fall. They don't break their arms or legs or do things like that. But after they have started gymnastics, they do break their arms and legs, and do other things to themselves. But you will go on falling like a normal small child, and you will not come to any harm." So that helped me a great deal; and it had an effect on my self-reliance, on my ability to surmount obstacles. I didn't realise all this at the time, but now I am fairly sure it was my father's words which made the difference. I must say that whenever I had overcome a fresh obstacle, I

felt quite proud of it. In my schooldays, my schoolmates never said anything about my arm; they never thought that I could not do things which they could do. Though I did not do gymnastics with them they just took this as a simple fact, and never talked about it.

The first eight or nine years of my childhood were happy. Later on, my mother, who was very delicate, relied I think too much upon myself in caring for the other children and it was perhaps a too heavy burden for me. On the other hand, I grew up to be responsible for them, and I felt this responsibility very, very strongly. I was looked on as the very responsible older sister, and I liked this sort of responsibility. I have always loved children, and I was very fond of my brothers and sisters.

A difficult thing for me about my parents was that they didn't believe in any religion; so I wasn't taught anything about God before I went to school, and it came as a great shock when I went there. And I remember coming home after I had my first lessons crying, and going to my mother and telling her, "Why have you never told me about God? Now what is the good of it when I am going to Heaven and you are going to Hell?" I thought I would be separated from my parents. Because I was pious and believed in God, I would go to Heaven immediately, and would see them in Hell because they didn't believe. So I started to get all my sisters and brothers to pray and we did that before every meal, after every meal, in the evenings, and in the mornings. My mother never objected to my doing it.

The other thing I think was important was the attitude to life of my father. He was an extremely social-minded doctor. Perhaps you would call him the old type of family doctor in the sense that he was a friend of all his patients. Most of these were poor people. His practice was in Berlin, but not in the west where all the wealthy people lived. It was in the centre, which is a very mixed sort of district, with many unskilled workers, small shopkeepers, craftsmen of all sorts, and people like that. There were some wealthy people who still lived there, but most had moved to the west end. But he had some wealthy patients; otherwise I think he could never have kept his family. For he gave his services freely to the poor people, and

they loved him. Very soon he let me into his medical work. I was his errand-boy, and I went into the homes of poor people, bringing things or asking questions. I took the prescriptions and other things he sent them. So very early I knew the poor too, and I think this was very important in providing a background to my mind and my feelings. My father had so much to do that we very seldom saw him during the week. The only time was really in the morning, when I had my breakfast with him. My mother breakfasted in bed, and my second sister, two years younger than I, was always a bit late. I never was, because I liked to be with him, and we talked together then until I really knew my father all through.

At that time doctors never had paid help, and when I was eight our play nursery was just opposite his surgery—he had it in our home—he came over and said, "I need your help. There is a small girl with a bad ulcer on her leg which has to be cut out. But somebody has got to hold the leg very firmly, and there is nobody else I can ask to do it. I must tell you that the whole thing does not look nice, but I am relying on you not to shrink or tremble seeing the ugly wound. If you did you would not be my real daughter." I clenched my teeth and just kept myself perfectly quiet. From that onwards I very often was called upon to help him. Very often I asked my father questions about all sorts of diseases, and I learned quite a number of things from him. He was quite keen to tell me. My mother was never interested in such things, and he never talked to her about his patients.

That we did not live in the west of Berlin, where all the wealthy people lived, helped me a lot. I despised the people who thought only of material things, and there were very many like that at that time, because it was a prosperous time—perhaps too prosperous for people like them. And there was another thing I did not like. That was the show of military things. I did not like that at all. Every year there was a big parade at a place called the *Tempelhoferfeld*; and always the two or three best children of the higher classes of the school were allowed to go there and watch it. I was quite a good pupil at my school, but I always refused, and I never did go there. I let the next one go. They sometimes wondered why I did not

go, and I told them I did not like crowds, and that there were too many people all together there. I said I was not interested in the kind of military pageant which you saw with all the soldiers parading there.

I'm quite sure that Germans specially like that sort of thing. The English people too like pageants. You have them here and enjoy them. It depends on what you make your pageants from. They need not be just a military parade. I remember the wedding of the Queen, and occasions like that. This is surely all right, isn't it?

Our lessons at school in history were not at all what I wanted—just battles and dates and kings, and all that. It wasn't very interesting. My father was a Liberal, and at that time I didn't think very much about politics, but I was very interested, as my father was also, in history, and very early I started to read good history books, and he helped me to understand them.

My father's mother and his sisters, lived very near to us—they were Jewish people—they were great, grand people—we all loved our grandmother and our aunts. Our grandmother spent nearly every afternoon with us during my childhood, knitting and telling us stories about her life, about all the things she had experienced, and we children loved it. She came from Pomerania, where my grandfather had a brewery, which was quite unusual for Jewish people to have, but they managed it very well. It was a small town and my grandmother there was very well known and respected.

I'm fairly sure that I inherited the love of my fellow creatures from my father and my Jewish relatives, who helped me very much to become what I try to be now. They were extremely kind, sensitive, intelligent people, very highly cultured, and they loved me so very much that I always went to them if something difficult in my life, especially as a child, happened.

My mother was very delicate, and she very rarely came to say "Good night" to us when we were in bed. I don't know if she was too delicate to attend to us, but we were only used to nannies and governesses. Most of them we did not like; but at that time, you know, all professional people had quite a number of domestic servants in their houses. We had at least

three maids, and often had a sort of governess to be with us. I do not think they were the right kind of people to do such work. At least they were not very well trained for it; and I remember that, when I was about eight and my second sister six, we were very angry about something our governess had said. When I was alone with my sister in a room I said, "Kate, stand up and swear with me that when we have children of our own, we shall bring them up ourselves. We will never have a governess in our homes." I kept my word: my sister never married.

Though my mother could not be disturbed with all sorts of domestic cares, there were always the other people—five of my aunts, my grandmother and my father. I wanted to become just as they were and I think that has always been my wish through my whole life. As a child I didn't see them as Jewish people; later on I realised they were Jews and I, knowing both sides, Jewish as well as Gentile, could be a sort of bridge between the Jewish side and the Christian side.

Our whole family was, I would say, quite musical. Three of my aunts—sisters of my father—had studied music. They taught us quite a lot at a very early age. We learned classical music, but also folk-songs and other songs too. We grew up familiar with Schubert, Mozart, and that kind of music, and thought that that was quite natural. There was never any sort of celebration in the family without music. We learned songs for this, but also learned to perform and all that sort of thing. To have music, always music, played a very great role in our childhood. Not only piano, but chamber music too. Being so many children, and being all able to sing, we had a sort of little choir all to ourselves. I remember that I was always keen to find other songs, often older songs, and teach them to my brothers and sisters. I did not teach them just the tune, but to make harmony out of two, three, four voices. For a very, very long time Handel was my favourite composer. I liked Bach too and we all loved Schubert. I suppose I could not say whom we loved best. We loved them all, and very quickly learned quite a number of their different works.

You know, I loved Berlin. It was my home town. I was quite proud to be a Berliner, though we children were never allowed

to talk the Berlin dialect. We knew it very well and loved it. When we were by ourselves we very often talked it. It was just the same kind of dialect as Cockney. A Berliner would often say a humorous thing in just the way a Cockney would. I remember a great big carter saying to a very dirty small boy—I was about eleven then—"and did you use a dirty frying-pan as a towel this morning?" I think a Cockney might say the same thing. We were never allowed to speak in such a dialect when our parents were near. It was especially my mother who did not like it, for during the week we did not see my father often.

TWO

AT SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

I WENT TO WHAT was called at that time a Higher School for Girls in Berlin. It was a very good school, but very strict. I loved it. I never had any difficulties because I came from a mixed home. In fact, such difficulties did not exist at that time. We had in my form a number of Jewish children—I mean Jews by religion. They had their Scripture lesson at the same time as we had ours; and they had an extremely nice teacher. We all loved her, and we envied the Jewish children because they were taught by her. Their being Jews never made any difference to us. They were our class-mates, and if they were nice we loved them, and if they weren't we didn't. But there was no difference in the way we treated them just because they were Jews.

At that time you went for nine years to school. After that, normally, most girls like me just stayed at home. They spent their time with embroidery, or with piano-playing, which I couldn't do with my lame hand, or with a bit of painting, but with nothing serious. But my parents were very modern in that they wanted all of us to be trained for a profession. And I was too young to be trained at that time, so my parents just let me have some lessons—languages, literature and a bit of the history of art, and this sort of subject. I had to learn sewing as well. This year was quite a good experience because my mother sent me to her own dressmaker. She was a very fashionable one, and she worked for all the great actresses in Berlin. There were about twelve girls who worked there—all from working-class homes. I wasn't taught specially. I worked with them.

I didn't learn so much about dressmaking as, I think, my mother hoped, but I learned other things about these girls. I learned about their background, and their outlook on life and all sorts of other things about them. I think it was not always what my mother hoped it would be, but I did not

talk about it at home. I just took it all in, and I think it was a very good thing for me. I must say that it never shocked me, though I am sure that there were quite a number of things I didn't understand, and didn't try to understand. I had lots of other things to think about.

The background of these girls was hard, but that did not shock me, for I had become accustomed to such things much earlier in the homes of my father's patients. I was quite used to those conditions, and I knew about poverty and hardship. I remember one girl who was extremely hard up; she lived in a big family, in small rooms; her mother was delicate, and she had got I don't know how many sisters and brothers. She earned most of the bread they needed—there was no father. And I remember that I went to my father, asking him if it was possible to help them a bit, and he said, "Oh, yes, that wouldn't be difficult." He could do it, and he did, and I was delighted.

Very early I thought, loving children so much, I would like to be a kindergarten teacher. There were some special seminars I could go to, and normally girls of sixteen were taken and trained, but I went there when I was fifteen. It was a good training and I liked it very much. I finished when I was seventeen; I got my certificate, and at once found a job in a very big girls' school—a private school, not a State school—where they wanted to put up a kindergarten and train their girls when they were sixteen in that sort of work; let them understand small children and how to cope with them and keep them occupied. It was a funny thing they took me—I was just a year older than my pupils, and I had to teach them psychology and pedagogics. You only do that when you are seventeen; later you find out yourself you are not well enough trained for that and much too young and inexperienced. I had in my kindergarten my two youngest brothers. That was not very usual, but it worked out very nicely. I taught like this for two and a half years—from 1908 to 1911.

But I was always hungry for learning. I wanted to know more about pedagogics than I had learnt; I wanted to know more about psychology, I wanted to know more about German literature, about languages and especially history. So I went to my father and asked him, timidly I think, whether I could

leave this job, and just try to study to go on to a university. He was delighted and said, "All right, do that, but under one condition. I want you to have a very good foundation for your matric." This was needed to go to the University. So there was only one thing to do. There was a sort of study group I could go to; the Headmistress was one of the women who wanted a good education for girls as well as boys, and she had founded it as a training school for that. By then I was twenty, and it took four years to get the matric, and a very good sort of background for the University it was. I finished this training in autumn, 1915. For the first two terms of 1915-16 I went to Berlin University, and didn't feel happy at all about it, because there was nobody who advised you about anything, and you were left with a very big book telling you what sort of lectures you could have and how many. And I, much too keen to have all I could get, took on too much. I studied Greek, Gothic, the old German, Alt hoch Deutsch, and Mittel hoch Deutsch, which really is quite a lot to do. And it was all needed if I was to study history as well as German literature.

So after my second term I again went to my father, and said, "Look here. I don't get what I want at the University. I can't go on like that. I think I should go to a small university." And he said, "All right, you choose one, but just take one not too far from Berlin, because of the war."

I ought to have spoken of the war before, for it began a year before I went to Berlin University. I know that when war broke out I, as well as nearly everybody else, was taken in. We were all caught in the wave of patriotism which swept the whole country. We never thought that Germany was guilty of starting it; we thought we were forced into it. I was not very happy when Belgium was taken over; on the other hand, I was not able to find out how wrong the Germans were; for newspapers and all the rest of the things we read did not tell you that kind of thing.

It was through my second sister, to whom I was very close, that I began to understand the truth. She had been trained as a gardener, quite unusual at that time too. She finished her training in 1913—my sister was eighteen then—and she, not wishing to stay at home, was looking for a job. We didn't want our parents to look into it for us, so we both had got a copy of

the small paper for the gardeners where advertisements were taken in for people who looked for women gardeners. Soon we found one in Belgium, on the coast in Nieuport, where three headmistresses had a home for children. They were looking for a German girl gardener to teach the children German as well as gardening with them. We thought that was just the right thing, so we wrote to them and still my parents didn't know anything. We got an answer—they wanted her to come—and then we both went to my parents and told them. This was at Easter, 1913. Then my parents made a number of enquiries; my father had got a friend in Brussels—he was a lawyer there—and he wrote to him and asked him to find out about these people. The answer was very satisfactory, so my sister went and took this job on and loved it very much. She stayed on there when the war broke out, and during the first month of the war we didn't hear a word from her, so that my mother was very worried. In fact, we all were worried, and I felt responsible because I was the one who had helped to choose this job for her.

When Brussels, in the first days of November 1914, was taken by the Germans, I thought I could go to the city, where these headmistresses had got a sort of little flat, to find out about my sister. My father said either we both went, my mother and I, or none. He didn't want my mother to go alone, which was quite right—she wasn't strong enough for that—but he didn't allow me to go by myself either.

So I went to the military headquarters in Berlin and asked for permission for both of us. I didn't think we had a chance, but at last we got the permission; we were just allowed a week to do it, and we had to start at once. So we did, my mother and I, and it was a very adventurous journey, I can tell you. We went through all the shelled and shattered cities, and our journey lasted very, very long. From Aachen, which was then the border, to Brussels it took us fifteen hours by train—usually you did that in two hours' time.

We had got the address of this flat in Brussels where we knew that my sister sometimes went, and my mother and I found our way there. The landlady, who was very unfriendly, at once found out by my stammering French that I was German, and the Germans were hated in Brussels. So she said that she didn't

know anything about it. The ladies from Nieuport had left some months ago. Then she slammed the door in my face. So I didn't know what to do. I went down the stairs—my mother waited there—and I had to tell her that I couldn't find out a thing; and I thought the best thing would be for us to leave the same evening and go back, without having had any success. So we walked very sadly down the streets, and then I suddenly looked up, and on the opposite pavement I saw my sister.

I shouted her name, "Katherine," and she looked up flabbergasted—she had in one hand her umbrella, in the other one her handbag—and she threw them both on to the pavement and rushed over and said, "I can't believe it! How could you manage to come over here?" We tried to explain, and found out that she herself had had no news from us for months, and was quite worried about it. It was just due to the chaos the Germans caused when they conquered the city. The Belgians—I can understand that very well—didn't want to work for the Germans, so the post and all that didn't work during the first weeks.

After the first joy was over, my sister told us, "I don't want to go back to Germany. I despise the German people. What they have done to the Belgians is really too horrible." She refused to come back with us. She lived with Belgian people and refused to talk to any German in the town. She wanted to become a Belgian as soon as she possibly could. She never wanted the Germans to know her as a German, but she hoped they would regard her as a Belgian herself. She told us quite a number of facts—that when a German officer was on the pavement, all the Belgian civilians had to leave it, otherwise he could use his whip. They all carried a sort of horse-whip. My mother didn't want to know any details about such things. But if she didn't want to know, I did want to know; and from that time onwards I was very suspicious of our newspapers, and of all the things we were told about the war. My whole outlook, I think, was changed. My sister told me that Germany was guilty of starting the war, and I tried to get the facts, and that changed quite a lot of my thinking and believing at that time. It came as a great shock.

She came back to Germany in 1921, because the home was

closed. The headmistresses had become too old to continue, and they would not allow her to become a Belgian. She could not find another job there, but she found one in Germany. She went back to Belgium in 1931 when she had become a disciple of Rudolf Steiner. He must have been a very remarkable man, for besides his religious principles he had thought a lot about gardening. He believed that feeding the soil with chemicals was bad, and had found out a method of feeding the soil naturally. My sister was one of the people who applied his methods in practice, and had very good results.

She went back to Belgium because she was asked to work on two big Belgian farms. They belonged to two women whose husbands were business-men; and the women wanted the farms reformed to work on the methods of Dr. Steiner. This my sister could do—it was a very good job. She had to leave it in 1939, because again the Belgians had reason to hate the Germans, and the two families, who loved her, could not themselves keep her with them. But they helped her to emigrate to the Argentine.

When I came back to Germany from Brussels in 1914 I tried to tell other people—friends and relatives—about the experience I had had in Belgium. But I could not make most of them believe all that I said. Only a few of them did, and I found they were people—Socialists, mostly—who always were a bit suspicious of patriotism and official news and all that. So that was, for myself I think, a step towards Socialism, but not in the Marxist way. I never have been a Marxist—but a Socialist from other points of view; from social points very often, and from the point of injustice to poorer people, and for similar reasons. My friends were liberals—all of them, I think—but not Socialists. At that time students were not allowed to join a party or do political work. Soldiers were not allowed either. Apart from that, women hadn't got a vote. I worked with the women who were trying to get women a vote. We heard about the Suffragettes in England, but I did not really like their violence. But I am not sure whether I could really judge. I had not got all the facts.

When my father told me to choose a university that was not too far from Berlin, I chose Jena, a very well-known University

from the Middle Ages onwards; and I went there to study, as my main subjects, history, pedagogics and philosophy, three subjects which were the least you had to have. At first I wanted to be a schoolmistress in a high school; after some terms I changed my mind and found out I wanted to be a social worker, and so it wasn't necessary to take the examination for the schoolteacher, but just get your "Doctor". And, you know, at that time not many girls got their "Doctor". Now it's a very common thing. It was in Jena my real studies started, and it was at an unusual time. We did not know then that the war was not going very well; we were still kept in ignorance about it. But we did know a little bit, and soldiers coming home on leave helped us to get a better and truer view of the things that were happening. But we had no idea of the whole catastrophe which was already brewing at that time.

Most of the men students were away as soldiers. Only the really disabled ones could not get into the forces. Even they were taken for other jobs in factories or offices. There were quite a number of women students in Jena, but they lived and worked in very small groups. I was very lucky in my studies, and found a real group of friends—very interested, intelligent young girls. Most of them were up to five years younger than I was, but it didn't matter very much. I remember that when I went to Jena my friends, and they are still my friends today, said, 'When you came you were a sort of grandmother. Every day you spent here you became younger and younger, and now you are your own age." I am quite sure they were right. At that time they were a really selected group who studied—very keen on their work, but not only on that, but on discussions on all subjects worth discussing. We had a sort of students' club where we met at least once a week, and we discussed all problems which we found in life, and in our studies too.

I was still extremely interested in religion, and I made it part of my studies. One of my teachers in Berlin had been Adolf Harnack. He was very well known and a very good teacher: I learned a lot from him. And there were others too. In Jena as well there were some very good men, who helped us to see religion from inside, and made us understand many things. But I was full of doubt. I had lost my childhood's

belief, and I was not able to get it back. I hoped to overcome my doubts by studying the subject. But it was no good. The Lutheran Church identified itself completely with the nation in its struggle, and that revolted me beside my doubts, and kept me away from churchgoing. I resented the sermons which said that "God is on our side", and things like that. I didn't believe it, and couldn't believe it. Ethical principles seemed to me more important then than Lutheran dogma.

Yet on the whole I was very happy in my years at Jena. I was lucky enough to have a good professor—too old to go to the war—but a very good teacher and very concerned to teach us all we should learn. I enjoyed it, I can't say how much. I was free from all domestic bonds—from the responsibility for all my sisters and brothers—I was just free to study and be myself.

In summer, 1917, the women students were called to do some war work in factories during their holidays. It was at that time all voluntary, not forced, and we responded, though already quite a number of us were fairly certain that the war wouldn't be won by Germany. I myself was not at all sorry about it; I hoped we would get a better Europe if the Allied forces should win.

One of the reasons why I wanted to accept the call to war work was that the women students at that time were getting advantage from the war. Nearly all the men were away fighting or doing other war work which prevented them from attending to their studies. So the seminars at the university were very small groups from six to ten students. This gave every one of us great opportunities of attention from the professors, such as students had never had before and have never had since. Each of us was well known by our professors and got direct and personal attention. Now I saw time and opportunity during vacation to do some war work, and I did not think it decent to shirk it. We did not like to profit from the war. I felt that, and the whole group of my friends felt the same.

We were told our soldiers hadn't got enough ammunition, so we thought that, even if our Government was wrong, it wasn't right to let our soldiers go without this sort of thing. We couldn't stop the war, and we were not sufficiently politically trained to think that we might shorten it. The second reason,

and this was the main reason for myself, was that I thought it was one of the best opportunities to live for a time amongst factory workers. We asked that neither the working people themselves, nor their superiors, should know that we were students. We wanted to be taken on as ordinary workers. That was agreed, and we went to a small town on the Elbe—Torgau —to live just as the workers lived. We got the same wages as the workers and we worked in an ammunition factory that made all the ammunition for a regiment. It was a very interesting job. We took it on for our long summer holidays, for about two months. We worked amongst quite a number of girls and married women with the same background that I had found already at my dressmaker's and with the patients of my father.

You know, the real difficulty was our lodgings. We wanted to live on our wages, and we wanted to live just as the workers lived. We didn't want any money from our parents or other people. The only thing was that we couldn't get the lodgings that the other workers had. They were not there: all lodgings were scarce at the time. We got the spare rooms of professional people. I was lodged by a lawyer, a very nice family. About that time the Revolution was brewing in Russia, and we all hoped that the Socialists would succeed in an unbloody revolution, and that at the same time it would end the war. Both hopes were shattered. Later on we knew very little of what happened in Russia. Our newspapers did not tell us very much.

It was, I think, the first time that I was in a big crowd of factory workers, and it was quite easy to get them to talk, it didn't interfere with our work, and I was very keen to learn about their background, and about the families in which they lived. It helped me very much to widen my horizon about the situation of manual labourers. I just remember one little thing, which I think helped me to persist in my Socialistic beliefs. We had to use a train every morning at about half-past six, to go from the town to the factory. We got very ugly, old carriages to travel in. They were mostly carriages used for cattle or other animals. Only our military superintendents had a good passenger carriage to sit in. And when we came back in the evening with the same train, it was just about seven o'clock. This was the time when all the officers on leave in the town,

with their wives, went by landaus and waggons drawn by horses over the railway. They were just going for a sort of outing, and we had to wait outside the station till all the carriages were gone. But I knew that the shops were closing and lots of women —housewives, mothers—had to do their shopping then. So I was very angry, and I murmured to myself, you know, perhaps I even swore, and then one of the old factory workers—he was too old to go into the war—put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Oh, child, be quiet. You will learn patience. We have all learned to bear that kind of thing." And I turned round and answered, "I never shall bear that. I never shall learn this sort of patience, and I don't want to." I was quite sure that this was a wrong sort of patience—just to bear and not to try to alter it. And that's what I wanted—to try to alter it, and I think the wish was fixed in my mind to stay on their side; to help them fight injustice, help them to get a better life.

I went back to Jena for the winter term, and in Jena are the *Zeiss Werke*, the well-known optical works. Zeiss declared they didn't get enough working girls in their factories and they wanted women students to come in—not during their holidays but during term time as well, so I decided with a number of my friends to go in there and work. That was a very different kind of factory—they made very delicate instruments and mechanical things—we made nails for telescopes in aeroplanes —it was very exacting work and difficult for me because you needed really two good hands for it. But I had to adjust myself to do it, and I finally found my own way.

I had a very good foreman who helped me—a very intelligent man, a Socialist—and sometimes we could talk together, though it was not always possible because of the noise. He came down to see me one day, and I could see that he was very troubled.

"Do you know," he said to me, "that you are being exploited? The management cannot get enough women and girls to work for them, because they don't want to pay them what they really should get; and now applicants are told: 'If you don't want to work for the wages we offer, there are the students. They are perfectly willing to work for any sum of money.' "

I was very shocked at this, and replied, "Let me confirm that first before I do anything about it."

So I went to the personnel office, to one of the girls I knew there, to ask.

"I have just heard a rumour," I said to her, "that you have turned away a number of girls and women who wanted to work here."

"Oh, yes!" she said with a smile. "Today we turned away a hundred."

So that was just what I wanted to know, and during the lunch hour I collected all the students working there, and told them the story.

"We must go to the Managing Director," was their decision, "and tell him about it. Then we shall leave."

So two of us were delegated to talk to him. He was not a very nice man.

"Why do you want to leave?" he asked. "You have quite a good wage, and it doesn't matter if you just go back to your studies a bit later."

"That's not the point," I answered. "We told you why we want to leave. We don't want to be used as people who just do all the things you want them to do, while you don't pay them as much as real workers would earn, and you turn away people who really need to earn their livings."

We wanted a certificate to point out there were enough other people to work in the factories, and that there was no need for students to slip in. Very reluctantly, after many more discussions, he agreed to give us the certificate we needed. On the day when we were to leave my foreman came to me again, and I saw he was still troubled.

"You know," he said, "when you go to the management office and get your certificate, I'm sure you'll get it in a closed envelope. Open it in the office, and look if the promised passage is really in."

"You're a very suspicious man," I said to him.

"I can assure you I have my reasons for that," he replied. "So please do as I say because, if you have left, you will never get in again."

I knew that was right, because the whole surroundings were

closed in. You had to get a sort of passport to get into the grounds. I could not warn my other friends about what he told me. So I went to the office, and, you know, it was true. I was given a closed envelope. I opened it there, and the passage wasn't in. I showed it at once to the office girl.

"I won't leave this office," I told her, "until I get what I have been promised by the Director. You just telephone him, and tell him I am here. I won't leave here, even if I have to stay the night and the next days too, because I want that certificate for our University officials. Otherwise they would say, "Oh, there, you see, they don't like to work hard. They would rather go on with their studies.' "

She telephoned and said: "Fräulein Behrend wants to talk to you. Shall I put her on the telephone?"

"No," he replied. "I don't want her. All right, she shall have the certificate. Put it in."

I wanted this passage in the certificate because we had some students from Marburg. Not all were from Jena. But the Marburg University authorities were very strict and patriotic. They were reactionaries really. So I was afraid that the Marburg students would have very great difficulty in making the authorities believe what we had found out. So I gave them copies of the certificate which I had got, for the statement was not on their certificates. I told them too that I would write to the Head of the University if he did not believe them.

I got my Doctorate in a funny way, for my thesis was not, really, a doctor's thesis: it was a prize essay. This is what happened. Former Archdukes of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach had presented their University at Jena with large funds to provide prizes for essays which were to be done by students. Each professor from the four faculties in turn named the special subject for the essay of that year. It was the turn of my Professor of History. He set a theme chosen out of the period which he knew I was especially interested in. He told me that he hoped I would take it up, though he was not allowed to know whether I did or not. He just said to me: "Look at the general blackboard in the hall. There you will find all necessary details."

At first I was very reluctant to start work on the essay, for I thought that every history student would compete, and I wished

to finish my studies as soon as I could. I did not forget there were seven sisters and brothers for whose training my father had to pay. But the subject chosen was too tempting. It was to write a life of the man who had taken the lead in the revolution of 1848 in the Archduchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. His name was Oskar von Wydenbrugk, and it was the most unbloody revolution I had ever encountered. Already in 1847 he was a member of the archducal parliament, the youngest one there, and he wanted to obtain the emancipation of the Jews. They could not go to the University, they could not vote, and had various other restrictions. He also wanted to see a proper budget for the state, separated from the Archduke's private purse. Here he was successful. But I was most interested in the fact that he was fighting then, when all Germany was divided into tiny princedoms and dukedoms and states of that sort, for a united Saxony, then a united Germany, then a united Europe.

He was a very unusual man, and still not very well known. He was a leader in the *Frankfurter Nationalversammlung*, where all the German states in 1848 tried to work out a new liberal constitution for the whole of Germany. But, you know, Germany became more and more reactionary, and von Wydenbrugk wrote and spoke against this trend with all his power. He tried to fight Bismarck's determination to make Prussia the leader of Germany, and was sure that the right foundation of the state should be justice, not power. He was a long way ahead of his time, and I wanted to write his life. So I entered for the prize essay, and I won it. That was a very good thing, for part of the prize, a very essential part, was that the prize essay could be presented for the Doctorate, and without paying the usual fee. So that was a second advantage.

Soon after I began on the essay the war came to an end. The Kaiser abdicated and went into exile and the 1918 Revolution started. It was not only difficult but sometimes impossible to keep my mind on studying and writing an essay. In November and December 1918 I had flu and could not work. But the essay had to be finished, typewritten, and handed over to the University by March 15, 1919. Hunger and cold were two other factors which made work extremely difficult. During the last

weeks before the final date I was forced to work day and night. By day I worked in the Library of the University, which nobody could call icy, though it was not warm. By night you would have seen a funny thing. I was sitting up in bed with all the clothes I had got put on me, and with a chair on top of the thin eiderdown to give me a feeling of warmth by pressing down the bedding. I finished just in time and handed in my essay at midday on March 15. With it went a closed envelope with seven seals all in red sealing wax and my name inside and a code word outside. The professor who had chosen the subject had to give a review of the essays to the deans of the other faculties, and get their approval of his choice for the prize.

When I had finished I went to Frankfurt University, where there was more material on von Wydenbrugk. But I came back to Jena for the annual Celebration Day, when the prizes were given. It was a page out of the Middle Ages, in a church belonging to the university, with a pageant full of colour, which I enjoyed much more than military parades. There were all the professors in their medieval hats and robes, then the Rector Magnificus with a long golden chain, then following him the Deans of the faculties, the delegates of the student corporations with broad silk sashes and lovely old embroidered banners, and finally all the other students. We all marched in procession through the old-fashioned town to the ancient church. But it was much too small to hold all of us, so it was only those specially invited who could go inside, unless they were members of the University. And at that moment I was a student at Frankfurt. But I explained to the Rector that I was a candidate at Jena too, and I got a pass.

It was a most beautiful sight inside the church, with a bright sun shining through the stained glass, and all the coloured robes. The Rector was in the pulpit, and he explained that, owing to war conditions, only one prize was being given. Then he produced the envelope with my seven seals and said: "Now before your eyes I open this envelope." Then he said that "the prize-winner of this year is"—and I heard him say my name. Then the brass band played a flourish of trumpets, the students along the walls lowered their banners, and I was glad that many people did not know me by sight, and that I did not have

to stand up or go to get my prize. For I was blushing with the congratulations of my friends. It was a very good thing for me. For there was quite a good money prize, a silver medal, and last, but by no means least, all the costs of printing my essay as my Doctor's thesis, together with the needed fees. All my family, and especially my father, were delighted. They had had no idea that I was even entering for the prize essay.

THREE

MARRIAGE AND THE FALLING MARK IN POST-WAR BERLIN

As the war went on, a number of disabled men came back to the University, and we were called to help them, and make friends with them. Some of the friendships have remained, but some were difficult. There was a soldier who came back, whose sister was a fellow student with me, who very much enjoyed talking with me. I liked to talk to him, but I was not thinking of anything else, when I found that he wanted to marry me. I did not want to marry him at all. His sister helped him and helped me also, for I was very sorry for him, and it was a great shock to him that I did not want to marry him. I thought I was too old for marriage then. I was twenty-eight, and did not expect anyone to ask me. That did not distress me—not at all. I was very interested in my studies, and knew what I wanted to do afterwards.

I was quite convinced that I wanted to spend my life in social work. The work I wanted to do was in the women's prisons. I did not know whether I would be working for prisoners after they had been released, or whether I would be actually an officer in the prison. I felt that it was very much needed for someone to do this kind of work. I knew it would need training and at that time I did not have any contact with prisons. That came later on.

So after leaving Jena, and having got my Doctorate, I went back to Berlin, and then I met my husband-to-be, not thinking that we would ever marry. He was a Jew, a Socialist, a widower who had lost his first wife when his child was born. He was a free-lance lawyer, who had had to give up his job for the war. He did not pass his physical examination for the front, but worked as a clerk. He would not become an officer, but was a sergeant. He liked to be among ordinary people much more than among the "high-ups". His name was Siegfried Rosenfeld,

but he was always called Fritz. He did not like Siegfried.

He was much older than I was, and the uncle of one of my best student friends. That was how I met him first. My friend wanted me to come to her grandmother's house where she was staying, and he lived there too with his three-year-old little girl. We had a very good talk after tea, he and my friend and I, and he told us about some book he had just read. I was interested in that, and he lent me the book and promised me to lend me more. He told me about his work as a Councillor in the district where he lived. Then he asked me what my plans were, and I told him I wanted to get some training in practical social work and then if possible do prison work. He was very interested in that. I told him too that I thought I would go to Hamburg, where there was a training school for social workers. I knew the Headmistress there, and she had promised to find me a part-time job to earn my keep, and then get me into the practical social work. I thought that a very good idea, and told him about it all.

We met again, fairly often—indeed, about three times a week! He used to just telephone to tell me about lectures and meetings and all that sort of thing. He talked about books again and lent me a number of books. We met at theatres, concerts, lectures and meetings; and after that we often went to a café, and talked and discussed things we had seen or listened to. I found him very interesting and I liked his looks too, but I didn't think very much about it. I thought he was just interested in talking with me. We understood each other perfectly. And then one night I had a dream about him, and suddenly I knew I was in love with him. But I didn't tell anybody about it because I thought it was just hopeless—he wouldn't marry again, I thought.

At one of our meetings he suddenly said, "By the way, I don't think it's a very good idea of yours to go to Hamburg. Have you made any definite plans yet to do it?"

"No!" I said. "I haven't written to the people there just because my parents thought that I should have a holiday first. But I think I will go. It's just the opportunity for me."

"Look here," he said. "I think I have a better one. I think it would be nice if you did not go away again. Let us go on

meeting as we do now—as often as we can during the week-end, and during the evenings when you are free."

Then he made a suggestion about another kind of work for me.

"In our County Council," he said, "there is a very nice lady, and she is head of a group of social workers to care for the families of disabled soldiers. They try to help them, and all that. She has had to dismiss one of the women working under her, and is looking for a substitute. That would be just the sort of place where you would learn all that you need."

"But I'm not trained for that," I said. "I don't think I can go there."

"No!" he said, "that's not so. She told me they haven't got enough trained workers, and I told her about you. So she's expecting you to ring her up to have an interview."

He persuaded me, and I went to an interview. That went well, and I started to work there at once. So that was that.

During the whole spring and summer I worked very hard and I liked my work and I learned a lot. I came to know then what social work really means. I studied a number of books, and the directress was a very interesting, intelligent and nice woman. She enjoyed talking to me, and helped me to find out all the things I wanted to know. It was just the sort of first job which I needed. I got very friendly with all the families I had to work with, and all my experience as a young girl with my father helped me to get easily into contact with them.

I stopped the work on the 15th of July, 1920, because on the 6th of July I became engaged to marry. Our actual engagement was a funny story. Fritz had got a flat, which was a very grand thing at that time, for you couldn't get one in Berlin easily after the war. But after his first wife had died in 1916 he went with his little daughter to live with his old mother and his sister, so he had let the whole flat with all the things in it—furnished—to a quite famous singer with his family. I think it was in the end of June that he told me that he had given him notice, because the flat would perhaps be wanted for other purposes; but he didn't say for which purposes. So I was really a bit angry with him for being so undecided and nervous about it.

When they had moved, he asked me: "Would you like to see the flat?"

"Why should I?" I asked him.

"Oh," he replied. "Perhaps it would interest you."

"All right, if you want me to," I agreed, "I will look at the flat."

I went there on the first Sunday in July, I shall never forget that afternoon. He showed me all the rooms and his collection of books, which was quite remarkable.

"Would you like to look through these books," he asked me, "and read them?"

"Yes, indeed I would," I answered. "If you would lend them to me I would be delighted."

He didn't say anything more. So I went home and thought, "It can't go on like that. It's impossible!" I wrote him a letter early in the morning after a sleepless night, saying that I thought it would be better to give up my job, to go to Hamburg, and do the sort of things which I wanted before. For I thought it would be better to be separated now—he should know me by now well enough to make up his mind. So on Tuesday, very early in the morning, I went to the house where his mother's flat was to slip the letter into their letterbox, and go on my way to my work. I found the door of the house closed, so I thought "What shall I do?" I thought I would wait because there would be somebody coming out, and the door would be left open for the day. To my dismay, the first person coming out was Fritz himself.

"What are you doing here at this time in the morning?" he asked me as soon as he saw me.

"I just wanted to slip a letter into your box," I replied. "But I couldn't get in."

I wanted to run away, but he gripped my arm to keep me.

"No, no, no," he said. "I won't let you go like that. I'm sure you haven't had breakfast. Let's have breakfast together."

You know, I couldn't get away, because he was quite right when he added, "It's not your working time yet. You can go to work a bit later."

So very reluctantly I went in with him—he was just going

to fetch the milk when he opened the door—and he asked me for the letter.

"No," I said. "It's not necessary now. I post it perhaps."

"That won't do," he replied. "I want to have it."

"Not now," I said. "Let's have breakfast."

I prepared the breakfast for both of us.

"Look here," he said suddenly. "I've made up my mind. Let's marry as soon as possible."

"Oh!" I answered. "Why so suddenly now?"

"Yes," he said. "I've just made up my mind. Why should we wait?"

"All right," I answered, "but now it is I who has time to wait. I don't want to marry so suddenly."

We argued about the date of the marriage. He wanted it in three weeks' time.

"No," I insisted. "That's too early. I have to give up my job, and I want to train my successor. Then I want a month at least to prepare some things for marriage."

So we discussed it, and we found that the 6th of September would be the right date, and he agreed reluctantly to that.

He was very sorry indeed that he had not proposed earlier. He often said to me afterwards: "I cannot understand why I did not do it." But the real reason was that he was very concerned about what I would say. He thought I had a career in front of me and he would spoil it, and he thought that he was too old, though that never mattered to us in the least. So these reasons had kept him silent for a very long time.

After our marriage in 1920, our children were fairly soon born, our son in '21, and our daughter at the end of '22; and our oldest daughter, not my own child, but very much attached to myself, was glad to get a sister and a brother, and loved them both.

My husband was a Jew, but he was not very concerned about religion because, you know, he belonged to a period where all sorts of other things mattered very much more, and in any case ethics were the most important principle. But he was a Jew, and he was a Socialist—Socialism was more his religion than anything else. He had joined the Social-Democratic Party as early as he could.

My own children were brought up—I must admit it and I'm sorry now about it—partly as agnostics. My husband wanted them to choose what they wanted to be when they were old enough for that; and I gave in to him because I thought he knew better, being the older and the wiser one. I now think children should grow up in one belief; it gives the child a sort of other world; it's not only the world here in which it lives—it's something more important, finer—and I think a world with belief in God, with angels and good spirits is a thing which a child really can appreciate, and perhaps very often needs to have. My stepdaughter, Gustel, was brought up with no special belief at all. My husband's family was very liberal-minded. My mother-in-law, who was eighty when I first met her, only went to synagogue two or three times a year. My sister-in-law, who had looked after Gustel, was an agnostic too. Indeed, many people lived without strong religious belief at that time; they cared more for ethics.

My husband liked me to share all his interests and he talked very much about his job as a free-lance lawyer. I loved to learn about the legal things. But we had quite a lot of argument because I very often wanted to see only the human side and he had to get me to see the legal side as well.

Berlin was a city where everything could happen. Partly it was in chaos after the war, partly everything was liable to be changed because there were quite a number of people who thought, "Now we can build a new, a better sort of life. There are many opportunities and we have to take them now." Politically it was all confusion; very leftish people mingled with people on the right, and difficulties of all sorts arose. And it was a starving city, because the end of the First World War saw Germany really starving. Nobody was prepared for such conditions, and the Allies didn't want to give us anything. That was when the Quakers came in. And people in Berlin have never forgotten what the Quakers did for their children. There came to be a funny verb in Germany—*quakern*—children used it mostly—and it was a very pleasant word. For the children got a meal at school, prepared by the Quakers, and consisting of cocoa, white bread, rolls with butter, which was a thrilling thing at that time. That was *quakern*. You know

things only became normal in 1924, not earlier. Till then it was very, very difficult to get the right food for children as well as for other people. I think only the very rich ones and the very bad ones got what they wanted on the black market for enormous prices.

It went on like this during the first years of my marriage. It was easier for us because my husband had a flat, and had got his furniture and all the things you need to set up a home. That side wasn't difficult, but all the other things—you know, food and all that—gave us a very difficult task. It got more difficult when inflation set in, and inflation of a kind, I think, which no other country has ever had. I remember that when my daughter was born in November '22, I had to buy a saucepan to heat her milk. This saucepan cost 40,000 marks. So that gives you a little idea of the beginning. For that wasn't the end of it. It got worse during 1923. Then we could buy one loaf of bread for a billion marks—twelve noughts! My husband never was a business-man—he never understood how the whole thing happened—that prices changed from one minute to the other according to the value of the dollar. When he earned his money he had to pay first his clerks in the office, then his rent, and then he had to help his mother—his very old mother—and his sister, who lived together. And then after that our family came. I remember that very often I didn't know how to get milk for the children, not to talk about food for ourselves. Very often we went without.

That changed a little bit for the better when I, through a friend of mine, got a sort of part-time job. I had to write down the diary of a German housewife for an American journal. Luckily, I could write it in German—it was translated—and I was paid in dollars. It was not very much, but I remember that with my first dollar I could buy not only food for a whole week, but a suit for my little son, as well as a coat for our very, very nice maid, who helped me in the household with the children and lots of other things. One dollar was really a sort of fortune. Incredible, the whole thing was.

It made quite a number of people very bitter. It didn't make us very bitter, because we never forgot the background of everything—that Germany really was guilty of starting the

war, and that from that beginning all the other things developed. We thought it would have been a good thing if the Allies had realised how dangerous the situation was in Germany, for it was the bitterness which made Hitler possible. And another thing about those days. The Weimar Republic was really doing its best, and it would have been good to have helped it more. It would have been more far-seeing. But it's no good looking backwards.

My husband was elected to the Prussian Parliament in 1921, and worked very hard as an M.P. As far as possible, I tried to help him with his work. In the autumn of '23 our difficulties disappeared, because my husband was asked to enter the Prussian Ministry of Justice in Berlin. They wanted to have a Social-Democrat in it, since this was the largest party in Germany at that time. My husband was its only representative in the Ministry. The Minister himself was a good, clever and wise man. He was a member of the Centrum, the Party which was in power; and he had known and worked with my husband in the Prussian Parliament. So Fritz became a civil servant, and as such got a monthly salary which was always changed according to the dollar.

He very soon reached a higher rank—quite a high rank actually—but when we were earning quite a lot of money, we were not tempted to put it aside in the bank, but tried to help other people with what we had left over. We lived a fairly simple life, which we thought was very good for our children too—we didn't want to spoil them.

Another thing we did—we left the flat where we first lived together, which we never loved very much, because it was in the very fashionable western part of Berlin, and we didn't feel very much at ease in this part. We were able to get a nice small house in a sort of suburb like you have here in England; and we thought it would be much better for our children as well as for ourselves. I must say, after we moved there our happiest years came.

When our children were no longer babies, I thought I could spare some time to work again. I was lucky in that my old wish to work in prisons came true, partly, I think, through the work on which my husband was employed in the Ministry. He

had very rewarding work, and he loved it very much. He was the official who had to decide whether a prisoner could get earlier release on parole. This work suited me as well as him. For he never stopped work when he left the Ministry to come home. He brought with him quite a number of files, which we went through together. We would argue over each case.

The work which I did I was able to do voluntarily. I did not have to earn a salary, for what my husband earned was quite enough for us. It was even enough for us to be able to help quite a number of the people whom I met in my work, though they did not know that we did it.

FOUR

WOMEN IN PRISON

I THINK IT WAS in 1926 that my husband told me that there was an organisation looking for voluntary workers, which wished to help the prisoners, and had the support of the Ministry of Justice. Because he himself had quite a bit to say about when a prisoner should be released, he had come into touch with the chief of this organisation. It worked with all the big voluntary organisations—the Catholics, the Protestants, the *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (Workers' Rescue Organisation), the Salvation Army, and some other smaller organisations. I asked my husband whether he knew what sort of voluntary help they wanted, and he told me he did not. He had talked it over with the chief—a very nice lady—who had asked him if I would come to her office and discuss what help I could give. So I went there and found quite a number of trained social workers who did this sort of work. But it was still a sort of experiment. At that time, and that was I think the best thing during the 'twenties, we were able to experiment, we were not hindered by bureaucratic things very much. We really could do what we thought best, and we came together, doctors, legal men, parsons, social workers and so on, to discuss our work and find out how to go on best with it—with rehabilitation.

I spent the first weeks with a very nice girl, a trained welfare worker, who went once a fortnight to the large women's prison in Berlin, the only large one we had got. Women are much more rarely criminals than men are. On the other hand, it's very often more difficult to get them back in the right surroundings and back from criminal life. All the prisoners who would be released during the next fortnight came to her in the visitor's room. She asked them where they would go when they were released, whether they had got any work which would help to keep them, how they thought the immediate future would be, and this sort of questions. She tried hard to get the prisoners, after their release, to come to her office. She couldn't

always succeed; prisoners when they are released are not always very willing to come to an office to be questioned, to be told what to do. Also she tried to get them to agree that part of the payment which they had earned from their work in prison should be transferred to her keeping to be paid back to them when they needed it. She needed their agreement, so it didn't always work very well. After some weeks, she asked me, "Would you perhaps like to come with me to the prison to see how I can work there?" And I was delighted. I told her that I had never before seen a prison, that I'd always wanted to do that, and actually do work in prison myself. She said, "Let's go together. We have to ask the permission of the Chief Warder." But that was easy. The Chief Warder of our women's prison at that time was a colleague of my husband in the Prussian Parliament. I knew her quite well and it was very easy just to ring her up and get her permission.

I shall never forget that morning—a very grim part of eastern Berlin, a sordid street with large apartment houses, an old building with grey walls. Nothing beautiful anywhere. We rang the bell, and then the real prison sound—the rattling of a big bunch of keys. The door opened and we went into a little hall. It had grey-painted walls—very dismal and depressing. We went first to the room of the Chief Warder who was very friendly and told us that quite a number of women would be brought down to see us.

To see these women clothed in ugly grey, in thick skirts and blouses, with a kerchief of the same cloth and an apron, again grey and ugly—all that was deplorable. I can tell you that during the first three weeks my husband had to awake me every night because I was crying and screaming, seeing myself in prison trying to help someone to get out.

The first three or four women came and told their story quickly; they were nothing special. They were not resentful of our presence; but one thing struck me at once: it was not right to come just before they were released. If anything was really to be done, you have to get them when they come in; then they might be ready to contact you, to tell you about their difficulties, if you have the right approach to them; if you make them feel that you love them, that you are on the same basis

with them; that they are just another human being and not a case or like that. If they come just before they are released they only see freedom—they never think what sort of difficulties they are going to face, and so do not appreciate your offer of help. My friend agreed, but she said it was impossible for us to do the work like that, though she was quite sure I was right.

We had one unusual case that first morning, Freda, a young woman of twenty-three who looked seventeen.

"Why have you come to see me?" my friend asked. "You have still a long time in prison."

"I asked to see you because I am very troubled that I will not get my flat back when I come out. I need it, because I have three children."

"But you must have a card," replied my friend, "given you when you were arrested, which will enable you to recover your flat."

"Yes," she said, "I have a card. Here it is."

My friend took it, and said "Look. It is all right. Didn't you see this?"

I can still see her blushing deeply and whispering "But I can't read."

"How is that possible?" I said. "A Berlin child who can't read?"

She told us how she had been often ill as a child, and away from school. She could not keep up with the others, and nobody had time to give her special attention. The Chief Warder gave her a very good character, and I asked her if I might come into the prison and teach Freda to read and write. She was delighted, and Freda was a very good pupil.

To get regularly into the prison I had to be delegated by one of the recognised welfare organisations, and this I arranged easily. Then I got access to the records of the prisoners. And I was very surprised because I found it was the third time that Freda was punished, always for petty thefts. The first times the judge was, I think, moved by her prettiness and her innocent appearance. Nobody could think of her as a good thief. But when the third time came, they couldn't do anything else but punish her fairly hard; she got one and a half years in prison, and she had done about two-thirds of it.

After the third lesson, I think, I started to talk with her, and she was willing to tell me about her life, which was really important. I learned that she helped her mother at home, which made her mother free to do housework outside. When she was eighteen, she met a man, and soon she was with child. Her mother insisted that she marry the man; and that was really fatal. He was a ne'er-do-well, and Freda, very well brought up, had to work hard to make both ends meet. This was too difficult when her third child was born. Her husband used her to commit petty thefts. He found little shops, and told her, "You go there and take this or that or the other." Then she said to me, "I can't tell you if I was more afraid of taking the things and being found out, or of not taking them and being beaten by my husband." She always *was* found out; she was not clever enough; she was much too anxious. Everybody at once could see what she was doing.

The time in prison had done one good thing for her: she had divorced her husband. Her three children had been taken away by the youth organisation, which always stepped in when mother or father were not at home to look after the children. After Freda had told me about it, I at once wrote to the organisation to find out how the children were, and I could tell her that all was well and that she would get the children when she was released.

Her husband had taken all the things out of her flat and sold them; there was nothing left at all, not even the children's clothes. I said, "Freda, don't worry about that; we shall help you." I could collect some money for her; we could buy the most necessary furniture, the most necessary things she needed for her flat; and I found a little flat which wouldn't cost any rent, because Freda could do the cleaning work for the house.

There was one other thing that worried me a little bit; but after a while she had so much confidence in me that she freely talked about all the things I asked her. I said, "Freda, you once fell in love with this man; that might happen again." She said, "No; now that I'm learning reading and writing, I will be very careful whom I choose." But I soon found out that she had chosen already—not badly this time. In the flat just below her own lived a widow with her son, a nice young man. When

Freda was beaten and his mother heard it, she sent her son upstairs to help her, and from then onwards they developed a friendship which held through the whole prison time.

Then the day of her release came. I was there to go out with her because I had already learned how difficult it is after a long time in prison to be at first among other people in the street. So she was very glad that I came and helped her there. She was married at once. I remember I went with her to one of the great department stores; I wanted to give her a special present, and she had decided on a tea service, and I wanted her to choose it for herself. She was delighted. And she found a fairly cheap one with flowers painted on it, and she told me, "I shall only use it when you will be my guest." I hope she used it some other times.

That started my prison work. I went twice a week—Tuesday and Friday afternoons—and these started to be my visiting afternoons. My next customer in prison was her cell-mate. I can't tell the whole story, though it's quite interesting. But from then onwards, I had always quite a number of girls coming to see me. They came voluntarily. The welfare workers couldn't just ask for the women to come down; they themselves chose to whom they wanted to go. Only to the welfare organisation for the released ones did they have to come—that wasn't voluntary.

Quite a number of the prison staff were very good. They were kind women—overworked, most of them. There were some of them who were hard and not at all sympathetic or able to see the point of view of a prisoner. After a while I found I had to work on the staff as well as on the prisoners—help to make them understand a bit better what the prisoners' reactions were. I think suffering of the mind, suffering of your feeling, is much more horrible, much more destructive, than physical pain inflicted on you. You can stand that better, I think, than agony in the mind. The ultimate destruction of your dignity, that's the most terrible thing.

I always started to do little practical things for them. They were restricted in writing letters, restricted in getting visitors from their families. I could visit their families, if there was something difficult or wrong, I could put that right very often.

But this was only the beginning. I always after that tried to get some sort of good link with the outside world for everyone in prison. That might be the family, but that does not always work. It might be one other person, very much attached to the prisoner; that is very good if you can find the right one.

And last, not least, there is the religious aspect. But you have to be very careful, and it takes quite a long time to get as far as that. I found very often that the time in prison was not long enough to get as far, so I did something else—and I could do it because I was working voluntarily—all of them got my home address, at first not to my husband's liking. He was at first very dubious how it would work, but after a while he found out it worked extremely well. There were never the slightest difficulties, and even notorious thieves never, never took a little thing from my house. They were so pleased to come there, and very many of them took this opportunity to stay in touch—in very close touch—with myself and my family. And I must say my children helped, they didn't know very much about prison, but they were quite used to lots of visitors, and visitors from prison were just the same as any others. And I think it helped my children as well to see all the people with whom they came in contact as human beings, as sort of neighbours, as people who were just on the same basis as they themselves were. There was one funny thing with my children. They thought it quite natural that I worked in a prison, and when people telephoned to me and I was out, they would say, "You cannot speak to Mother. She is in prison." I think some people were a little puzzled sometimes, but my children couldn't understand why!

It was not always among women in my own prison that I worked. Our prison teacher, Miss Stefan, one day came and said, "I want to have a private talk with you. Could you manage to meet me after you have finished your work here?" So we did, and she said, "You know that I once worked in our convict prison for women in Silesia. In that prison I met a woman, a very special case, I think, and I got very attached to her." So she told me this story.

Anna was an illegitimate child, born in the utter wilderness of East Prussia—you find there lakes and woods where you can

walk for hours and hours without finding any house—and her mother never wanted her. She never found any love during her childhood. She never visited a school, never learned to read or write, it wasn't easy for her to put anything into words, to let other people understand her, and I think she was only about eight when she had to go to work on a farm. Later she joined a group of migrant farm workers. When she was, I think, eighteen, she met a man who promised to marry her, but didn't, and she had a child by him. She loved the child dearly and she tried to put him in a good home, but it was very difficult for her to find one.

When the boy was four or five she took him with her because she couldn't find a good home. But the group of farm workers with whom she went around didn't want a child there. The child didn't know what to do, it cried, and they found it a nuisance. Our poor girl was extremely distraught and after a long while the thought came to her: Wouldn't the child be better off dead? So she couldn't help herself—there was nobody else to whom she could talk—and after a long while she thought out the easiest manner to kill him. She thought the best thing, where the child had not too much to suffer, was to drown him in warm water, in a bath. And she did that. After she'd done it —after the child was dead—she was in despair, and she did a very foolish thing. She cut the child up and put the pieces in the pond on the farm. Just an hour later the child was found.

When she went to trial she was not able to talk, and the judges thought she was just stubborn, and did not see the sin of what she had done. I got at that time the cuttings out of the papers, and I was so angry about these reports—none of them, none of the reporters, none of the people in the court, had tried to find out what really her feelings were—nobody! She wanted to face the death sentence, but was given instead a sentence of life-long penal servitude. She tried to take her life and failed.

She spent eight long years quite solitary, by herself, in a cell, and there it was that our teacher, Miss Stefan, met her. She was the first person who got Anna to talk, to tell her about her life, her childhood, her wish for a love which she never got, about her child and so on. Miss Stefan was the first, I think, who told her about God, about our religion, and that was the

first thing which helped her. She saw then she had to go on living, she had to try to live and to make good as well as she could. Miss Stefan did more; she taught her to read and to write, and she gave her a sort of diary to write down her whole life-story. This diary is, I think, one of the most interesting documents you could find about human life. Alas, I had to leave it behind in Nazi Germany.

After eight years of living in the one cell, without any real human relations at all, except the warder or Miss Stefan, all the people who knew her thought it was high time to release her. Otherwise she wouldn't find the way back into ordinary life, and Miss Stefan told me the whole story because she was concerned about what to do with her after her release. A Princess in Silesia with a very, very large estate had already agreed to take Anna, but made one very good condition; Anna should be used already to ordinary life so that nobody else there should know where she came from. And Miss Stefan said, "You see, I can take Anna into my little flat, but that would be the same thing as in prison. She would be the whole day by herself, it wouldn't help her at all. What shall I do with her?" I told her I had to think about it, and I went home that evening to talk to my husband, telling him I thought we were the persons who had to take Anna in.

My husband at first thought I was going too far. I told him that in this sort of work you couldn't just stop, you had to go on, and there was nobody else who could do it. At last he gave in—he usually did. The thing started in spring—I think it was '30 or '31. I invited her and Miss Stefan to tea first, the day after she had come from Silesia. Anna was trembling over and over—it was very difficult at first to set her at ease, every little loud noise—ringing the bell or all that—made her jump. I told her that I wanted her to work in my little garden, but then she said, "I would rather be in one room by myself and do some embroidery"—she had learned that in prison—"And you shut the door and lock it." I said, "No, Anna, that wouldn't do. You shall try to work in the garden. Nobody will disturb you there during the morning. After that the children will come home from school and then we go on and see how it works." It was very difficult, but the garden helped and the

children, specially my son. He was the same age as her boy would have been, and she took to him at once. She followed him as a little dog would follow his master and Peter—very unself-conscious—didn't mind at all. He took it for granted, he talked to her, he helped her in the garden, and that formed the first normal relationship for her. After six weeks—very hard labour it was—she had made such progress that I could write to the Princess and tell her I thought Anna could stand now ordinary life quite well. Anna went and all went well. We corresponded together till '33, when we broke off all our relationships because it was dangerous for them. But then she was fairly well established. She sent little things—vegetables from the farm and all that. I think she really found her way back into ordinary life.

That's one story, you know, and I believe thousands could be helped find a way back into ordinary life if there were enough people working—having time enough—to help.

I did this sort of prison work till the 31st March of 1933. Then it stopped, and I still remember that on that afternoon I had already my hat on my head to go out to do my prison visiting when the telephone rang and I went to take the receiver. There was the warden of the prison saying, "I'm very sorry. I have to tell you not to come. You are not allowed any more to come here."

FIVE

UPROOTED FROM WORK

THESE WORDS ON THE telephone ended a whole life for me. But they were not all she said.

"Haven't you got an Aryan person," she asked me, "to come here and do your work?"

"No," I answered, "I haven't got one, and I don't want to send one. You know quite well that it is not work which just anybody could take up like that."

She knew this was true, so she added, "You wouldn't be safe here any more. That's another reason why you mustn't come."

"Not safe?" I answered. "How can you say that? You know that there is nowhere that I could be safer than just in our prison."

"I had to give you the message," she replied. "I can't say any more."

That was the last word I ever heard from the prison.

I learned very soon afterwards that Hitler had stopped this sort of work altogether in the whole of Germany. He thought it was only sentimental, and that criminals couldn't be hard enough treated. Our work, in his opinion, made things much too easy for them, so that the whole work stopped from then onwards.

In '33 nobody, I believe, realised that Hitler really would do all the horrible things he later did. Though we had all read his book *Mein Kampf*, and though he had said in it that it was necessary to destroy the Jews, we didn't think he could do it. Things written in books very often don't come true.

Before he came to power there were quite a number of laws which forbade racial persecution and discrimination. But a new order started with the burning of the Reichstag at the end of February '33. After it, he told our President, Hindenburg, that it was done by Communists, which was not true, but we did not know the facts at that time. We ourselves never believed that Communists had done it, but Hindenburg believed that, and

he was the President. He could give Hitler more power by a special law. Afterwards the Parliament, the Reichstag, stepped in to confirm it. The Nazi Party and the Conservatives together had the majority, so they made a new law which gave Hitler, as Reichskanzler—Prime Minister you would call it—all the power he needed. From then onwards he was a despot, an autocrat who could do what he wanted. Still we didn't believe that he could do all the things he later did, the horrible things. How he came to get all that power over the lives of such a vast number of people is the sort of thing my husband and I and our friends very often thought and talked about.

It was done with such devilish cleverness. It was just like a net, at first with very wide mesh, but it gradually got narrower and narrower. People didn't know how narrow it had got until they found themselves caught in it—stricken with fear and terror, and not able to get out of it.

There were quite a number of reasons for that. The economic difficulties—the Depression—had set in in '29. People in vast numbers lost their jobs, poverty returned to stare them in the face. Another thing was that none of the people, except Social-Democrats and Communists, had got over the last war and its consequences. They resented the very bad Treaty of Versailles with all that it brought to them. And when Hitler came and promised them to get Germany out of all her difficulties, there were many, many people who believed him, because they wanted to believe. They needed somebody to raise their hopes; and I know that more than one would imagine thought he was the only hope who could bring Germany again into equality with other nations, where it had been before the First World War. I think that was the reason why many joined the Nazi Party. Others hoped to get a job, to earn enough money to feed their families.

He was helped too by the political confusion in Germany, which was a very great concern both to us and to our friends, though there was not very much we could do about it. We who were Social-Democrats did not have any Communist friends at that time. The Communists were so hostile to other Socialists that there could not be any co-operation between them. We would have liked such co-operation, but it was impossible. That

made Hitler's rise much easier. And, too, the Communists had had contacts with him in the past—for their own ends—but we in the Social-Democratic Party had never done this. I think that the Conservatives had done the same. At that time they just thought that Hitler was a good buffer between our Communists and Russian Communists, and between our Communists and other parties in Germany. They did everything to help Hitler to power. Against Hitler were the Democrats, the liberal part of the Centrum, and the Social-Democrats. These groups all worked together as far as possible.

We never liked—we never approved of—Hitler and all his followers. We had watched what happened during the years before '33 and all we saw we didn't like. But we never believed that he could fulfil his promises; we thought that he just tried to get power, and though we never imagined at that time to what horrible lengths he and his Party would go, we never for a moment wanted to join his Party. Perhaps it was due partly to our Socialist beliefs.

Hitler himself called his Party "The National-Socialist Party", but that only meant that he wanted to get into his party people who perhaps before were socialists, were workers, were people who found themselves unjustly treated by society. He wanted to get them into his Party and to vote for him. I think that was the only reason why he called the party "National-Socialist Party".

In the beginning the talk about *Herrenvolk* and all that didn't come forward very much. That started later, it was meant for the young people. Ordinary people around us just joined the party because it might be the one and only opportunity for us to get out of chaos. I remember one type of Nazi poster which said:

WE ARE THE ONLY PARTY WHICH HAS NOT
GOT ANY DIRT ON ITS STICK

In German that is a sort of pun on the German words for "dirt" and "stick". It means that it had not got the mud of broken promises and all that sort of thing sticking to its walking-stick. It had not wallowed in the mire of dirty politics, perhaps conveys what it meant. It was true at that time, because they had

no sticks yet: they had no background, they were a new party, nobody knew much about them. They knew about their promises, about their ideals, about the youth organisations which they had founded, but nothing more. They seemed quite a new force. Hitler and his people were at that time, I think, the only ones who talked of large-scale national planning, and, because of the power he already had got, people believed he could put good national planning into action. No other party was able to do that. Being democrats, they were split—not able to get enough votes together.

Ordinary people—men and women whom we personally met, our grocer, our milkman—though they had the Party badge, didn't change in their attitude towards us. I'm not quite sure they knew we were a Jewish household, but they knew quite well we were not members of the Party, that we didn't even approve of the Party, but they didn't mind that, their friendly manners didn't change a bit. They didn't realise what it meant to belong to the Party at that time, it was just another political party. They hoped that this Party would fulfil its promises, that was the only thing. All the other parties had disappointed them because they never could do what they wanted to do, and what they promised to do.

When Hitler came to power early in '33, he started to pursue his political enemies. A very great number of Communists and Social-Democrats were taken, not to prison, but to concentration camps. He was the first to start this kind of thing in Germany. Quite a number of our friends tried to take refuge in our little house to escape the Nazis.

We had just opposite, in a little house just like ours, a very nice Police Station—good men all of them, some of them in our Party. They had known us for a long time, and they tried all they could to help us. But there was a day in June '33 when one of them came to our back door, found me and told me, "We have got a number of the so-called S.A.—Hitler's storm-troopers—in the Police Station. They spy on us and they will do all the things we don't want to do. We can't any longer protect you. Be careful. You can't hide people here any longer. It's much too dangerous!"

I don't know where these storm-troopers came from. They

were not trained people. They were just long-standing members of the Party who wanted a job, very often people who couldn't get decent jobs, young men amongst them, amateurs in police work. Very many of them, lots of adventurers, lots of ne'er-do-wells came into the Party and got jobs, and got too much power even at that early time. They could become unreasonable—they could become violent, and I had quite a number of examples of what they could do from friends who had been beaten, badly beaten. But they were very careful not to let things happen in the street. There was no fighting in the streets, as there had been when the Nazis wanted to show that the other parties could not govern, could not preserve order. But there was a great deal of violence behind closed doors, whenever there were political meetings—meetings of all parties. The Nazis always made disturbances at these meetings. There was a great deal of fighting, even in the Landtag and the Reichstag—the state and national parliaments.

When they wanted to attack single people, they took them to some place where they could beat them and nobody saw it; they didn't have to let people see that, because they were afraid people might react against them, and they didn't want that at that time. Later on they dropped all these precautions and did just what they liked. But at first you could hear people whispering, "This man has disappeared. We don't know where he is. We are sure the Nazis—the storm-troopers—have taken him. We have no idea what happens to them."

This happened again and again and it awoke the fear of people—ordinary people. People who couldn't get work, who couldn't get jobs, who had once been nearly starving after the war, didn't want to have the same experience happen again, so they easily gave in—I think more easily than they would have done in normal times. Times were not normal in Germany. I think they were not normal in any European country, but other countries hadn't got this sort of fear, hadn't got this sort of disappointment about the political situation which we had in Germany. It was disappointment over parties which meant well, but couldn't do anything. Nothing happened there. People didn't believe any more in the parties, even in the Social-Democratic or Communist parties. They tried to believe

in the Nazi Party—the one and only party which they hoped could give them what they badly wanted.

The trade unions were reformed by the Nazis. They made their own trade unions and promised the people who were out of work—and that was a very vast number at that time—that they would give them work and food to keep their families. I think a big number of people did not actually join the Party, but just thought "all right, we get jobs. That's all we want now. We were rather in despair before that. Now we work, we earn. That's all we want. We didn't think, and we don't look, any further". And I think that was the attitude of the average German. They didn't want to look further because it was dangerous. They might lose their jobs again, and they were afraid.

I remember one curious little thing. It was in May '33, and at that time already the Social-Democratic Party as well as the Communist party were forbidden. One day I was alone at home when a knock at the door came and there stood two storm-troopers, very tall, very young men. I asked them what they wanted and they said, "May we come in?" I said "Oh yes, come in." They came in and said, "Look here, you belonged to the Social-Democratic Party. This party does not any longer exist. We are the heirs of all parties. So will you now please pay your regular party dues to us." I said "Thank you very much, but I wouldn't do that. I don't belong to your party. I now belong to no party at all." They just looked stern; nothing else. You know, I'm sure that they wanted to impress me, so that I became afraid. I pushed them a little bit towards the door and they left without another word. They could have done quite a lot, because they had got truncheons. I'm quite sure they knocked at quite a number of other doors before they came to me, and the people were so afraid of them that they really paid. I never was afraid. That's a funny thing. I don't know why, but I never was afraid. I never was afraid of any human being.

I think sentimentality as well as utter violence went together with the Nazis, but, you know, we didn't see very much of the other side of the medal. We didn't see the sentimentality. We only heard about it or sometimes we read about it in the papers

because that was one thing the papers had to say in this time—all the little things about Hitler bending down to little children, kissing them, taking flowers from them with a smiling face, stroking dogs and having cats in his arms and all that. And not only Hitler himself had this sort of thing; his underlings too were photographed in the papers. The men we knew only as bullies making horrible shoutings and abuse on all of us, we saw suddenly in the paper playing the piano, sitting with children at their sides, and all that sort of thing.

The Jews were in an extraordinary position. We knew we hadn't done any bad things, and that we suffered unjustly. But I still think it's easier to suffer unjustly than to inflict sufferings on other people. It is more difficult to feel yourself guilty that, not you perhaps, but others around you, inflict sufferings upon others in your name. I know that quite a number of friends of mine—Germans—felt like that and they did all they could to help us, and stood up against unjust things, but there was not much they could really do. There were little groups which stood up against Nazi injustice. Some were formed by Catholic people, some were formed by Protestant people, some were formed by ordinary people, I think, belonging to all political parties. They could only come together in small circles, but they did so, and all they could do at that time was, I think, to help people like ourselves. A surprising number of German people did that.

I'm quite sure many intellectuals didn't believe in all the things Hitler and his people said. These people were not the ones who made their voices very much heard; they were the more silent ones. They didn't want to endanger friends, or acquaintances. They tried to keep themselves to themselves as much as possible because it was the only thing they could do, and such people—I'm quite sure of that—existed during the whole Nazi time.

My husband was still in Parliament, but things there had changed considerably during the first months of '33. There was fighting always, fighting between Nazis and the other parties: fighting sometimes between Nazis, Communists and the other parties. So it was a dangerous thing to be in Parliament at that time. They had quite a number of night sessions—they never

could finish in time; and I see myself during these nights sitting in our living-room with the telephone beside me waiting for a call telling me that my husband had been hurt. It never happened, but it was disturbing and difficult. Having been in Parliament for a long time, the Nazis knew him very well, and his job carried a high rank. He was a very conspicuous man. He lost his job early in '33. They didn't want him to do his work any longer, so he had to be dismissed. He was called "politically unreliable" and for this sort of person they had made a special law. Politically unreliable persons got only a very small amount of the salary or pension which they really should have. We found it very difficult to live on that sum. From that time onwards I knew we had to leave Berlin.

SIX

UPROOTED FROM HOME

We thought about emigration, but my husband was too old, and delicate too, and trained in a job which he could do only in Germany, in German law. I myself was younger, I could have found work, but our children were too young—they couldn't do any work at all—and we wanted them to have at least as good an education as we were able to give them at that time. So we decided to go to Bavaria, where we had spent quite a number of happy holidays. We left Berlin in the beginning of July 1933, and then went to a little place not very far from Berchtesgaden which we knew very well and where we had some very nice peasant friends, several families and quite a number of people whom we had met during numerous holidays. We knew they were not Nazis at all.

When we left our home in Berlin we never thought that we were leaving it for ever. We hoped then—and I think most of the people like us did the same—that it would just be for a short time. It was wishful thinking. I am quite sure of that now. But I am just as sure all of us are apt to think like that.

At first we thought we would spend the rest of the summer there, and find some other little place to live; but afterwards we thought it would be quite good to stay there. After the summer holidays our children had to go to school again. They went to the little village school, and they liked it at first. We loved the country there, specially the mountains. We were mountaineers, my husband and I, and our children loved it too. And the life there was much cheaper than in a large town like Berlin.

We had to live on the small part of the pension which my husband still got. I couldn't get a job at that time; that was impossible, because nobody would have engaged me. It was already difficult for Jewish people at that time to get new jobs. Some of the people could keep their work when they had been

there for a long time; but to get a new job for a Jew was extremely difficult. Even though I was a Protestant Christian, that didn't count for employment—only the racial point of view counted. I was married to a Jew and that made me fully Jewish in the eyes of the Nazis. At least it did while I stayed with him and my children.

You know that Nazi laws about Jews were illogical and absurd really, though they were carried out so savagely. Between the people they called "Aryans"—it was quite imaginary—and the people they called Jews were people called "non-Aryans", and not all laws about Jews applied to them. But it was never very clear which did or didn't. I was a non-Aryan because my father was a Jew, but my mother was not. She had no Jewish blood at all. And I had been brought up as a Christian. So if I wanted to, I could leave my family—some non-Aryans did—and I would have been able to do many things I could not do as the wife of a Jew. There were so many non-Aryans in Germany—more than a million and a half, I think—that they could not treat them all as Jews. And non-Aryans did escape many of the sufferings of Jews. But I wanted to stay with my family. I loved my husband and my children and did not want to leave them.

The first months were quite pleasant, and we all enjoyed them to a certain extent. But during the winter our children had to suffer from the teacher as well as from the other children at school. They called them names. They really made the time very, very difficult for them and there was nothing left for us to do but to remove them from school. This was not easy, because children at that age had to go to school—they were forced by law. But we got permission to take them from school, because I was allowed to teach them myself.

Now the Nazis again stepped in. They didn't allow us to stay in the little place. There were some local Nazis who prevented us staying there. We moved to another village. There we lived in a sort of flat, and after a while we knew that our landlady conspired against us. She earned quite a lot of money as rent for this flat, but took us only because it was out of season and difficult to get tenants. Then when the season was near, I am quite sure she thought she would get more money if she let each

room separately to tourists visiting the spa. So then we were no longer of use to her.

We learned later on that she was a really evil person. She had betrayed many people. We learned that there were some persons in this place who had wanted to warn us, but she never let them get near us. She prevented them from seeing us and talking to us without her being present. So we decided to leave, and find some other lodgings not too near to her house. But she acted before we did, and she launched a series of denunciations of my husband to the Nazis—that he had called Hitler names and abused the Nazi Government. At that time, you could not only get ten years of prison for that, but you could be beheaded.

People here in England and people in other countries have not realised this situation—have not lived through it themselves—but I'm sure it could happen easily everywhere if people are not careful to recognise the beginning, and stop it. When fanatics and terrorists start to get a large number of people to believe in their promises, in their principles, in their commands, and just do what they want them to do, this sort of thing can happen. People think it could happen only to the Germans. I'm sure it could happen nearly everywhere.

It was on the afternoon of the 7th of June 1934 that suddenly I, going to do some shopping, met the gendarme coming on his bike. I knew him and he greeted me. I don't know why, but I went up and spoke to him.

"Are you coming to us?" I asked him.

"Yes," he replied. "I have to take your passports away."

"Then I'll come back with you," I said.

I then went back with him and he took our passports.

"Does this mean," my husband asked him, "that we are now under arrest?"

"No", he explained. "It only means that you are not allowed to leave the country."

"We don't want to leave the country," replied my husband.

We went back then, but we were suspicious. So my husband suggested that we should leave the village as soon as possible. "I have to get some more money," he told me, "and you do

some shopping and try to get another trunk or case to pack our belongings."

I went towards the village and met the caretaker who worked for our landlady. I was with our peasant friend, and when this caretaker saw us both he caught her and said, "Don't go with this woman. They are swine." This was very usual by that time, and Jews had to get used to being called that. But it was still unusual for us, because he, like our landlady, was still polite and appeared on the surface to be friendly. So it was very strange that he should say this about us. At that moment my husband passed us and heard the words and said, "Say that again." And the caretaker retorted, "Oh, yes. I say it again and again." And he said it again, and at the same time pushed my husband so hard that he fell down in the street. He looked at us savagely and was full of hatred. And he had a revolver in his belt, the caretaker had—he was a storm-trooper—and I knew he meant to shoot my husband. But I just couldn't move. I was frozen to the ground. Then our peasant friend at that moment just took his arm and said, "Tell me why you call them that," just to keep him occupied and let him forget what he meant to do. My husband was able to get up, and disappeared.

I still couldn't move. But after a little while—my friend still talking to the caretaker—I left them both and went towards my husband further down the street, and there we decided to leave at once. First he had to get some money from the bank, and he said "You had better go back to our rooms. I will get a trunk as well. You start to pack in what we have already got."

I started to pack our things, the children helped me, and that was very necessary because I was nearly beside myself at that moment. And as soon as we had started to pack, a knock on the door came and the gendarme again appeared and he said, "I'm very sorry, but I have been ordered to look through all the things you have got." I said "All right; do it." He didn't find anything which we shouldn't have had. He looked for books forbidden by the Nazis, or letters insulting them, and such things. He didn't find anything, for there really was nothing there. We were much too careful for that. We knew it was a danger, and we didn't want to endanger our children, and even

ourselves. It was not a risk which it was worth while to take.

Then he started to question me myself, and he said, "Before I came here to take your passports you told me you didn't want to leave the country. You told me you wanted to go away but some time later. Now you are packing. What's the meaning of that?" I told him what had happened in the street. He didn't believe me, and at that moment I realised very clearly how difficult it was for people before a court to make the judge or the court believe what they said. Even if it was the real truth, it's extremely difficult. And I was very lucky that at the same moment my friend, the peasant friend, appeared, and the gendarme, knowing her very well, said, "You tell me what happened." I had told him that she was present there. So she told the same story and he believed her, so that was all right. And then he said, "I have to arrest your husband."

I said, almost despairing, to myself, "I don't want to stay here a minute longer." Then the gendarme took over the whole situation. "Well," he answered me "that's quite easily arranged. I will telephone now for a taxi. The taxi can first take me and your husband to prison. Then it can come back and take you and the children to a small hotel I know. The people there are very nice people. They will not make objections to your staying there." It all happened as he said. We went, and he sent our peasant friend to stay with us that night. We did not stay in the hotel for long, because it was too expensive for us. But we found rooms in the same place, and we were still staying there when, as I will tell you, a friend of my husband appeared, and was allowed to visit him every day.

Our lodgings were with a Jewish lady, who took me in at once with the children; they lived through the whole thing with us. It was impossible to keep them away from all this sort of thing. But the one thing my husband and I from the first moment onwards were agreed upon was that no hatred and no bitterness should come into our feelings and into what we said. We knew that hatred and bitterness were negative things. We didn't want ourselves as well as our children to become involved in this sort of emotion.

That my husband had to go to prison wasn't such a shock as you would think it was. By that time we were so used to knowing

that friends of ours and other people, who had never committed any crime, were being brought into concentration camps or prisons that the simple fact of that didn't shock us. Only the consequences were shocking—we didn't know what could happen to him. My husband at the time was suffering from a duodenal ulcer, and we were not able to consult a good doctor. We could not ask anyone to operate, because we did not have enough money to pay for it. So it was a very difficult time for me, with all the family to look after, and doing everything that we could as well for him. But we got over this stage, and good friends helped to get my husband out of prison.

At that time we knew there was no justice left in Germany. No court was free of Nazis—was free of the principles of the Nazis—but there were quite a number of people who were still very much concerned to work against that. We were extremely lucky to find a lawyer in that little place where we then lived, who at once agreed to defend my husband when necessary. This was in June '34. He was a stranger to us, but when I came to see him and told him the story, he at once said he would like to work for us, though I told him it was dangerous to work for a Jew and a Socialist. He didn't demur at all—he was very keen to take this sort of job—but he told me at once it was such a dangerous position that he needed help. He asked me if I knew any person with high rank in the legal world who would come to help him. I knew a man, though I had never met him personally, but my husband knew him very well—he had worked with him together. He was a High Court judge. He had resigned as soon as the Nazis came to power. I know that quite a number of people who wanted to do the same were not allowed to do it. How he got the permission I don't know.

He lived at the other end of Germany, in Silesia, and I wrote to him. He at once replied by telegram, and told me he would like to help us. He came at once, and not only was he allowed to visit my husband every day, but he went to the court in Munich (which would be the court for trial) and found there a number of old-time judges who really were horrified about the whole story.

Before the trial took place, my husband was already released on the promise that we always would let the court know where

we stayed. At once we went to Munich. We thought at that time it was safer to be in or near a large town than in a small place. But it was also better to be in a place where we were not known. Nobody knew us in Munich—Berlin had been quite another thing—we were well known in Berlin and that had made it very difficult. We didn't want to stay in the city itself. We wanted to live in Icking, a village not far from Munich in the valley of the River Isar. To stay in the big town would have been too great a strain for my husband, who then was very weak after a month and a half in prison.

We knew we had to ask the Gestapo for permission to live outside the town. So for the first time I walked into their headquarters, and I was very glad to find an old Police Inspector, because not all people in the Gestapo were storm-troopers or even members of Hitler's party. They had to take old trained people, and this Inspector was one of them. And he said at once, "Oh, yes, you can live where you want to, if it's near Munich. You have to give me the address because of the trial awaiting your husband." But the trial never took place. Hindenburg died in August, and there was an amnesty. So the judges at the court to whom our friend had talked about the whole affair decided that my husband's case should fall under this amnesty. It's impossible to express what a very great relief for all of us this meant.

We had chosen this village where we wanted to live, first, because there was a private school into which our children could go, secondly, because there was a flat available in a nice house, owned by a man who was not at all a Nazi, and very willing to take us in. We moved in there in the autumn of '34 and lived in that village for the next five years. To make ends meet, we took in paying guests—Jewish people from Munich who couldn't get other places to stay at for their holidays.

The ordinary people in our village with whom we had to deal—the grocer, the coal-merchant, the Mayor of the village and others like them—were extremely friendly and kind, so we felt fairly safe. There were only two conspicuous Nazis in the village, but even they didn't do anything to us.

In autumn '35 the so-called Nuremberg laws were enacted and that meant among other things that no Jews and no Jewish

households were allowed to keep Aryan servants. Other things, too, were restricted, but it didn't make much difference to us. We kept ourselves quite to ourselves—we didn't want to make any acquaintances, to have any social entertaining or anything like that. We were only too glad to live in a nice house in lovely grounds. We had the basement and the ground floor, and above us there was living a widow. She was a member of the Party, but a friendly person. She was a sort of illusionist who believed all the things the Nazi told her in the newspapers, on the radio or at meetings. When posters came to the village announcing that Jews were not allowed this and not allowed that, she came to my door to express a sort of sympathy.

"I'm sorry for you," she said, "because this applies to you too. But, you know, you have to suffer with your people, and just accept it."

"What do you mean?" I answered her, for I resented what she had said. "Because you are a German would you like to be identified with some terrible German murderer, like the one we are reading about in the newspapers now, who murdered a lot of little boys?"

She was shocked at my saying this and answered me, "How can you suggest such a thing?"

"It's just what you have suggested to me." I told her.

She was very taken aback by this. She could not reply. But I must say that she went on showing us always kindness and friendliness.

We wanted our two younger children to get some training for a job. There was only one sort of training left for the younger ones, and that was to become farmers. We sent them at Easter '37 to a farm in Silesia very near to the Polish border. Before 1933 it had been a Jewish-owned farm; then it was taken over by the Nazis, but they allowed it to be used for the training of young Jews and Jewesses, because it was so neglected and produced so little that the Nazis thought the Jews might as well have it. The extraordinary thing was that two years after the Jewish trainees had taken it over it was graded as a farm in the second highest class in Germany. For by that time the farms were all graded by the Nazis. And then they took it back.

Our eldest girl was the only one who had been able to go to a

high school, and she actually got her matric. She even learned two foreign languages, English and French, as well as shorthand and typing. She was able to do this because she was allowed to spend a year in Geneva.

Let me add something here about what happened to my parents and my brothers and sisters. In October 1929 my father, whom I had hardly ever seen ill, had a very bad attack of 'flu. He tried to overcome it—just not to take notice of it—and went on with his work till he couldn't stand it any longer. He had only three days of illness and then died, which was a very great shock to all of us. He was then sixty-nine, and still so very busy that he had hardly any time for social life. The only thing he tried to keep up was to visit us every Sunday morning and stay with my husband and myself and our children for some hours before he went home for lunch. He was a great friend not only of myself, but of my husband, and I had always known that I could never have married anybody who wouldn't be a friend of my father. He loved his grandchildren very much, and they loved him. We didn't lose only our best friend in him, but our doctor as well.

At first I was so sorry about his early death, because I thought that he could have gone on and lived for some time as he was not old. But when the Nazis came, I saw it in quite another light. He was spared all that experience.

I shall never forget the memorial service. I've never seen such a crowd at any other funeral or memorial service. Not only many of his patients were there, but also our Lutheran pastor, with whom my father was very friendly and who had stood with him at many of his patients' deathbeds, and all the deaconesses of the district where he lived. There were so many people that the large hall couldn't hold them all; they were standing outside to listen to the words our pastor said about my father's life. The pastor talked just as a friend; and another friend from his University days said some words also; and there was some very nice music, because we all loved music very much.

My mother found a little flat, not very far from us, where she could live by herself. I think it was in 1931 that my third sister's husband, who was an engineer with the great firm of Siemens,

got the job as a director of the firm for the whole of the Argentine. They left with their two boys to settle down in Buenos Aires. When the Nazis came to power, they tried first to get my two youngest brothers to come over to the Argentine. This they could do, and Heinz and Fritz left Germany in '33. At first they could work in Buenos Aires, but even there the great depression started, and soon after they lost their jobs.

My brother-in-law and sister had decided to buy a large piece of land somewhere in the middle of the Argentine, in a better climate than Buenos Aires has. It was amidst the mountains, high up—about 4,500 feet high—a real wilderness, an immense piece of land where almost no vegetation grew, but there were some meadows. There were mountains, and streams, and waterfalls, and lakes. Since water is the real shortage in South America, this was the wealth of the land. I'm not quite sure that they realised it at that time. The land was cheap to buy because nobody knew what to do with this large piece of land where no road existed. So my brother-in-law bought it, and asked my two younger brothers if they could do anything with it.

The youngest of them—Heinz—who is extremely practical, agreed; and Fritz, who is not as practical as Heinz, but was always a very great friend of his, agreed to help. They set out together with a tent and some supplies. They lived in the tent for three-quarters of a year, during which time they built a rough road (more like a track) which a car could use, and also started the first house there. To cut a long story short, they succeeded in founding a real village. Now there are three hotels, about forty-five to fifty houses, all built in the Swiss chalet style, which suits the landscape very well. They planted a great number of trees and gardens. When I visited it in 1951, I found it a real oasis amid the barren surrounding country.

In 1937 our oldest daughter (my stepdaughter), Gustel, went to the Argentine to marry my youngest brother, Heinz. They built the third of the hotels in this settlement, and started their own family there. My mother had found it extremely difficult to stay on in Germany during the Nazi time, though for her there was no difficulty or danger at all. My sister and brother-in-law in the Argentine asked her if she wanted to

come over, and she did so in '35. She enjoyed her life over there till the autumn of '44, when she died at the age of seventy-six.

My other sisters and brothers emigrated during the following years between '36 and '39, so that all of them went out of Germany and I was left.

My second sister, Kate, of whom I have told before, always spent her yearly holiday with us after we had settled down in Icking, near Munich. After the Nazis had come, and many of my family had settled in the Argentine, we devised a very nice plan for all of us, which involved our going there also. We wanted our younger children to have training as farmers and settlers overseas. Kate at once told us that she would be only too glad to join us and to have a sort of family arrangement. My youngest brother would have a garage and filling station; I myself would start a café and hotel with the help of our two daughters; and she, together with our son Peter, would keep a nice vegetable garden under Kate's supervision, and perhaps keep fowls and other small animals as well. This plan seemed to crystallise when Gustel went to marry my brother in 1937 and our younger children started in the training camp for farming.

In the autumn of 1938 we thought that the plan would be realised. On the last day of October we had already got our berths booked on a steamer for Buenos Aires. Then suddenly new regulations from the Argentine Government made the whole thing impossible. We had to start all over again.

SEVEN

THE TERROR BEGINS

When my children had gone to train on the farm there was enough to do in my household to keep me occupied, and I did not know that soon the Jewish community would need people like me, as I was a trained social worker. I would know how to help them in difficulties, and we could see that more difficulties, more hardships, were coming. But I was still not officially a member of the Jewish community, and I had to think about that. I was accepting that I was Jewish from the standpoint of the Nazis, but the Jewish community was right not to accept that the Nazis knew the truth of who was a Jew.

I think I always liked to be on the side of suffering people—to fight for them if possible—but at least to be in their midst—to give them as much friendship and help as I could. You get quite a lot of things back! It is never only one-way giving. You always, I think, get more back than you give.

I knew they would not take me unless I belonged to the Jewish Religious Community. I went with my husband, in I think late September '37, to Berlin where we heard that a liberal Rabbi lived. We went to him and when he heard my reasons—because I told him I was, religiously speaking, a Christian and not a Jew, and didn't mean to change my religion—he replied, "I do understand your reasons. I give you a certificate to say you are a Jew belonging to our Community." And that was that.

Then came the 9th of November, '38. On this night all the synagogues in Munich were burned: all the Jewish shops smashed or taken over by so-called Aryans. All this was due to the murdering of a single German official in the legation in Paris by a Jew about whom we had never known anything. The Nazis needed a scapegoat and the Jews were the scapegoat through all the centuries. So they were made responsible for this too. It was not only in Munich that they were the scapegoat. The same thing happened in every town of the German Reich.

On the morning after what had happened during the night our Mayor in the village was ordered by the Nazi officials of the district to tell us we had to go away. I can still see him sweating and stammering, while he was trying to tell me what he had been ordered to. He didn't like telling us that. He always had been extremely friendly, and he said, "I think you only have to do it for some days. I'm sure they will change their minds, and then you come back. And the one thing I can assure you—all your belongings here are safe. I shall see to it that nothing happens. If you want to give me the key, everything will be safe." And nothing happened in the village there.

We packed a few necessary things, and we went to Munich, not knowing where to go. How often during the next five years was I forced to pack the most necessary things for our family or myself! We hoped at first to find a little guest-house, and were told that all guest-houses, all hotels, had been forbidden to take in Jews. It wouldn't have been clever to try to tell them in the *pensions* we were not Jews, because you had not only to sign a form, but you had to show your identity card or something like that. Then they would know in any case, so we thought it much better to tell them first. But we didn't know what to do and I can still see us walking through the streets, still finding shop-windows smashed by storm-troopers, still seeing large vans draw up and taking Jews from the streets to put them in the nearest concentration camp in Dachau. It was one of the most terrifying days I can remember—I still dream about it.

We were not known in Munich, and we were not recognised as Jews. It isn't always easy to recognise Jews if they haven't got noticeably Jewish features. During the whole time I was thinking, thinking, thinking, "Where shall we stay? Where can we hide?" We knew the head of the Jewish community in Munich, a revered and wise old man, whose son was at the same training farm as our children, but we decided not to go to him because we were quite sure that a vast number of Jews would go there to ask for help.

We knew one very large grocer's shop and its proprietress, because we got some of our provisions from her. I knew where she and her family lived and I, with Hanna our youngest

daughter, went there. We left my husband and Peter, our son, downstairs and I found that the Nazis already had been in her flat—beaten her old husband, who was over seventy, and taken him away to Dachau. But nevertheless she invited me in and said, "I'm not quite sure they won't come again. But there is no other male here, so I'm willing to take Hanna and you for the night. I don't dare to take your husband and your son, because, after all, they might come back, and I'm expecting my daughter and son-in-law from Cologne. They have telephoned that the same thing happened there, and they wanted to leave Cologne at once."

So I went down again and said to my husband and Peter, "Now we have to find somewhere for you to stay." There was a very nice Aryan—I say that word in quotation marks—dressmaker, with whom I had become quite friendly. I went to her and asked her if she would take my husband and Peter at least for one night and she agreed. So that was that.

I didn't sleep during that night. I was thinking what to do next. We really had only two other friends in Munich. The man, Francis, was a painter and his wife, Helen, was a pianist. I telephoned to her from a public booth. We never telephoned from any room in a flat or in an office. Helen told me she was afraid to take us because the storm-troopers had not yet been to their flat, but she was sure that they would come to take her husband. She was afraid that if they did come, and if they found two other males there, they would take them as well as her husband.

After that night was over I went with Hanna to see my husband and Peter, and was told by my dressmaker that already a Nazi official had visited her to make it perfectly clear that every person who took in a Jew would not only be taken to prison, but perhaps would suffer greater and more dangerous punishment! So they couldn't stay there. Again, in my despair, I telephoned Helen. To my greatest surprise and relief, she told me, "It's all right; you can all come now. Francis has been taken to Dachau. They wouldn't come again. Now you stay with us. I would be only too glad to have you all here." And that we did, and we stayed in their flat for about a fortnight. During that time I already went to the Jewish community in

Munich and offered my help, because I knew that was needed.

I think that fear is one of the worst things which people have. If you can get them free of fear, that's one of the great things. If you can make them see that they can overcome fear, it's a very, very great achievement, and I tried to do that with the help of others who thought alike. Love is the great thing to overcome fear, and to stop hating—to make people see that its not their business to hate, because it's a negative thing. Nothing good can come from hatred or bitterness, even hatred of the Nazis. You know, I never succeeded with quite a number of people to make them see it like that, but some of them did, and I know it helped them. It must have been latent in them, otherwise I never could have brought it out—and I was not at all the only one to do that, there were others who helped me.

It was chaos in the whole Jewish community, and they needed all the help they could get to put them into some sort of order, because all jobs were taken away from the Jews. Shops were smashed, taken away from them, and all other jobs as well, or rather almost all of them, were taken away from them. They had no idea how they should earn their living. So very, very great difficulties arose, and people had to be helped as much as possible. And I, used to social work, could do a bit to help them. In Helen's flat where we all stayed there was not much do to. The children could help to do the housework. My husband and Peter were not allowed to leave the house because it was dangerous to go into the street. Somebody might ask them who they were, or order them to show their identity cards.

We went back to our little village after a fortnight and found nothing in our flat was changed. Even the local Nazis didn't say a word against our coming back. But from that time onwards we knew Hitler would try to do all the things he had already spoken of in his book, *Mein Kampf*. We all knew we had to leave the country as quickly as possible.

It was difficult, because we had been so sure we would go to the Argentine all together to live there as a family again, that we never had tried to emigrate to any other country. There was a big waiting list to go to America, and you had to get a numbered card even to get on to the waiting list, and they only

took a special quota every year. But, you know, no country wanted to take in beggars, and from November 1938 we were allowed to take only the most necessary personal belongings and 10 marks of money. That was all. Even our personal belongings had to be marked down on a list, every little item of it, and all the things were valued by an auctioneer. We had to pay for every little bit, at least a percentage of the whole sum. We packed our belongings in April '39, but not our furniture, for to take this as well would have cost more than we possessed. Then we had to leave the big flat where we had lived. It had become much too expensive, and we wanted to give our children when they left Germany, and ourselves, a sort of outfit to help us over the first difficult time in another country. When he packed these belongings, we had to pay 1800 marks for our things—clothing, a little bit of bed linen, household linen, a bit of crockery and cutlery—not silver, the silver we had to deliver, and all our jewellery we had to give up. They—the Nazis—said we would be paid for the silver and jewellery, but I can tell you that it was such a small sum of money we got for it that it was ridiculous really. But those were the sort of things which happened at that time.

There is another thing I have to tell you. All these regulations were secrets. We were warned not to talk about them. Ordinary people were not allowed to know they existed. After the burning of the synagogues and the smashing of the shops, people reacted quite in another way from what Goebbels had thought they would. There was quite a lot of anger from ordinary people about it, saying, "That's unjust. That shouldn't have happened." The Nazis had gone much too far. People didn't want things like that to happen. After that Goebbels ordered that all the new regulations against the Jews must be kept secret. People who had to execute these regulations were strictly forbidden to talk about them, so that a vast number of German people didn't know what happened to us.

One thing which always troubled me was that people outside Germany—in all the European countries, in nearly all of America, I think—knew what was happening in Germany, and they didn't do anything about it. Even after November 1938, when we very much needed help, nearly all the people in

other countries didn't help us a bit! On the contrary, there were lots and lots of new regulations, which made it extremely difficult for most of us to get out of Germany. You know, America, North and South, and Australia at that time could have taken in all the Jews remaining in Germany. It wasn't such a vast number. It would have been a very easy thing to do. They didn't want to. The only country which was willing, at least for a time, to take Jews in, was England. England was prepared to take in all Jewish children, when the parents agreed, and many Jewish parents at that time wanted their children to leave the dangerous country as quickly as possible. Nobody knew what would happen next.

I myself accompanied Bavarian children, not only from Munich, but from other places in Bavaria, during one night every week—the Wednesday night—to Frankfurt, where the train via Holland to England went with children from all parts of Germany. I did that during the whole summer of 1939. I started, I think, in March and it went on till the autumn. I returned from Frankfurt for the last time a week before the war with Poland began. My own children were too old to go with the so-called children's transport. But the Quakers again stepped in, though it was our cousins in London who went to them, and were able to send us all the information we needed for the children. Besides that they got the necessary guarantees for Fritz. I did not need them, as I could take a household job.

When the Argentine plan failed, there was no other country left to us but England. When Kate's Belgian employers heard about that failure, one of them, though she had never known us personally, at once offered to pay for Peter to go to a farm school in England. We hoped that if he could stay there till he was eighteen, he could get work as a farm labourer afterwards. In April 1939 the Quakers helped us to find a farm school in Surrey to which Peter went, and Kate's employers paid his fees. We couldn't, we had no money. We were never able to save enough money to have a substantial sum in the bank.

Then it was the turn of our youngest child, Hanna. She was sixteen, too old for the children's transport, too young to be anything but a domestic trainee. It was through a pen-friend of

Gustel that we found the right thing. It was a friend she had found through an exchange teacher of English at her school. This friend, Dora, was studying to be a French and German teacher. She wrote in 1935 that she must go to Germany to complete her studies. But because of the Nazis, she couldn't see where to stay except perhaps in our family. As I was always taking paying guests, I at once agreed, and Dora spent her summer holidays of '35 and '36 with us. She became a friend of the whole family. When the difficulties after November '38 had become so great, she wrote at once and offered all the help she could give us. I wrote back to her asking if she could find a nice household where Hanna could go, if possible, in her locale. She found a nice family—the family of the headmaster of the large girls' school near London in Twickenham where she taught. Dora herself lived in Richmond and Hanna during all the years she stayed with this family until she started her training as a nurse, could visit Dora and spend her spare time with her—which was a great help to us.

So in May 1939 the last of our children, Hanna, left us. She was only sixteen at the time, and I can tell you that it is a terrible thing to send your half-grown children to another country, just by themselves. My husband and I both felt that. We were torn between relief and agony. On the one hand we were glad they could leave; on the other hand it was very, very difficult to let them go. Family life is a very important thing. I am quite sure of that, and my work in prison convinced me that a happy family life during your childhood helps you to get on with life even if later on it gets difficult. And I think that helped our children to go through the extremely difficult years when they first came to England, and that was the same when our eldest daughter went to South America as well.

After the children had left us, we prepared for our own emigration. I had applied for a domestic job in England to help to keep my husband and myself. My husband was not allowed to work in England because there were still many English people who couldn't get a job, and I think it was quite right not to let foreigners take the jobs which English people could have taken.

My husband's permit came on the 24th of August, 1939, and

at that time we knew that war was very near. With this permit came a letter from the General Consulate of Munich telling him that he had to go the next day, on the 25th, to Munich to get his visa, because after that nobody else would get a visa. The consulate people themselves leave on the evening of the 25th by the same train he had to take. All the English tourists had to leave as well. We knew that because there were some in our village, and they got a telephone message from the Consulate to leave at once.

My papers didn't come. Only my husband's permit came.

My husband was very reluctant to go without me. I had the utmost difficulty to persuade him to leave the country without me. We had promised each other not to separate, but we never foresaw at that time that war was so near. I knew that he was in greater danger than I, and much less able than I was to stand the humiliations and perhaps worse things which would happen as the war drew so near. You know, in every shop-window, at the entrance of every concert hall, cinema, theatre, every public building, you had big posters, "Jews are forbidden to enter", and horrible things like that. Even large posters appeared at the entrances of every village and little hamlet, and it was extremely difficult to ignore the feeling that we were pariahs, and not to show our resentment to other people. And I could do that much better than he actually could. I think he was even more sensitive than I was. So it was more for his own sake I implored him to go than for the sake of our children. I knew they would manage some way, though it was very hard for them, but he couldn't stand the ceaseless strain. And the last thing which persuaded him was a friend who was staying with us for her holidays. Being independent, and not a Jewess, she promised at once she would stay with me until I could follow him. When he got to London his cousin met him, and he was able to live with them until Peter got a job. Then they lived together.

We had been married nineteen years, and they were happy years. It was the first time during our marriage life we really were separated for longer than a few days. If I'd known then we would be separated for seven years I don't know how I could have endured all what happened later on. But one of God's

blessed gifts is that nobody knows what the future will bring.

I accompanied my husband to the main station in Munich and we arrived in one of the largest thunderstorms I have ever seen. We had to hurry up the steps not to get wet through. We found at once a very nice middle-aged porter who helped with the luggage. My husband went to get his ticket and a platform ticket for myself. During that time the porter asked me, "Is the gentleman travelling alone?" I could only nod. When my husband joined us the porter suddenly said, "Don't be too distressed." He added: "You know, I've seen such a lot of people leaving Munich as you do now, and I can imagine what it must feel like." Then he turned to my husband and said, "Don't be too distressed that your wife can't come with you now. If there's any difficulty for her, you may be convinced she always can come to live with us, my wife and myself. I am porter number 45 here in Munich, and here is my address." He kept beside us the whole time, until he got the luggage into the overcrowded train—my husband couldn't find even a seat. He had to sit on his trunk in the corridor. Then the porter shook hands with both of us, looking at us in such a very kind way that it helped us both, I think, to overcome a terrible moment.

We took our leave before my husband stepped into the train. I had to stay outside. It was not possible for me to go in because it was so overcrowded, but he could just manage to stay at a window and look out and see me. The window was open, and he could wave until I could not see him any more.

My husband was going via the Hook of Holland to London. There he stayed at first with a cousin who had very kindly written that he could stay with him and his wife. They had a little house in one of the suburbs. My husband was not a practical man, and he was not good with manual tasks. I always had to take care of his suits and coats and all the little daily things. Now he was left to do it without me helping him. I thought about that and wondered how he would manage. I could keep calm and not show my distress until the train had left the station. Then I let myself go.

I didn't mind leaving the station with my tears streaming down, I didn't care at all. I went slowly down the steps to get

into the hired car of one of our village people. He was the coal-merchant, and he saw my face. During the whole time we went back to our village he swore, just to let off steam I think and then, in between, he turned to me and said, "Look here, you shall always get your coal from me. You can be assured, if there are difficulties during the years to come, to get coal, you will be the one person who always gets what you need." And he kept his promise. He keeps it to this day. So you see these little things were a very great help.

My friend was already standing at the little garden gate when I arrived in the darkness. We were living in a little summer-house when we moved from the big flat in the same grounds early in spring, partly because of the lower rent. So I did not feel quite alone.

EIGHT

THE YELLOW STAR

SIX DAYS AFTER MY husband departed war broke out. It was a very different sort of feeling compared with the outbreak of the First World War. People were very subdued; you didn't hear any enthusiastic word about it. They all feared what was coming to them. They remembered too well the long years of the First World War and most of them were afraid. One could even hear them saying what a shame it was to go to war again.

When I met my colleagues in the Munich Jewish community to offer to work again full-time in the Welfare Department, I heard them discuss what would become of the Jewish population now that war had begun again. Some believed we would be shot. Others quietly replied that it was useless and meaningless to talk, or even think, of matters which we knew nothing of at all. I could only agree completely when one of the social workers I liked very much said to us all:

'Let us keep in mind that, whatever happens to us, there is nothing we can undertake to save ourselves from the fate the Nazis decide for us. We have hoped for a long time that the other nations might come to our help, that the burning of our synagogues, the plundering of our shops, the arresting of thousands of our men, would arouse them to help us all to emigrate after the 'Crystal Night'. Nothing has happened. On the contrary, most other countries have made it more difficult for us to go there. During the last year every Jew in the whole Reich has tried to leave Germany. They have collected the dozens of necessary papers and their passports with the large 'J' on the cover.

"This has given the Nazis all the documents and records about every one of us, and it is all efficiently and neatly filed.

"Even passive resistance would be utterly hopeless. It could only make it easier for them to destroy us. That's our situation. Let us try to go on from day to day, do what we can to help our people when they are penniless. That is all we can do."

This was exactly what I felt. Nobody had anything to add, so we went to our work.

We were surprised that even now, after the war had begun, Jewish emigration did not wholly stop, although it became slower and more difficult. Emigrated relatives in all countries doubled their efforts to get visas for us. Chile, Shanghai, Cuba seemed to offer new possibilities. In November 1941 I was told that a visa for Cuba would be sent me. But just then the Nazis prohibited emigration of all Jews under sixty.

Soon there came quite a number of new restrictions. Jews were not allowed to keep their pets; they had to give them up. They were not allowed to have wireless sets or any electric equipment or electric cookers and kettles, or this sort of thing—they had to give it all up, deliver it to the Nazi officials. But all these regulations were not openly declared. They were still secret. They were made only for Nazi officials and Gestapo men, whom the Nazis thought could be trusted. And on the other hand these men were promised they would get these things for themselves. So there was a sort of profit in it, and you can always get people to do that sort of thing if there is profit in it. The Nazis made it quite clear to all the people who worked for them, it wouldn't be hard for Jews just to give up "these little amenities", as they called them. Why should the Jews have them all, and why shouldn't the Germans themselves —poor people—now get some of these conveniences and pleasures. This appealed to the S.S. men. How nice to go home to his family, bringing a good wireless set or an electric cooker or something else! The family would appreciate it very much! The father coming home would have lots of praise for it. But ordinary German people—most of them—didn't know this sort of confiscation was happening.

After November '38 Munich was the only city in the German Reich where every sort of entertainment for Jews—even if they did it inside their own circle—was forbidden. They were not allowed to have any regular divine service, or any concert, or lectures, or anything of that kind. That was very, very hard to bear. It kept people constantly thinking of their worries—of their anxieties. There was nothing left to take their minds away from all the difficulties they had to live through. But it didn't

destroy their culture; they tried to keep up as much as they could in their own families—or bigger families even. But that isn't quite enough; you need a bit more to get outside of yourself. You need to sink yourself into a larger circle, a sort of corporate expression. Preparation for this larger sort of entertainment would keep our minds away from all our anxieties and difficulties. But there was nothing we were allowed.

One reason why we got all these restrictions was the Nazi purpose to humiliate us as much as they could; and the second reason was that they wanted us to get slummy and poor, and lead a very primitive life. All these things were still kept secret, because they didn't want the German people to know them. They had learned their lesson in November '38. The German people had not approved of the burning of the synagogues, the smashing of the shops and all that—they didn't accept it without protest. There were quite a number of people who grumbled, and said that wasn't the right sort of thing to do.

Our feelings at this time were that only very few persons knew what was happening to us. Many of us believed we all would be killed. We were quite prepared that this would happen to all of us.

Up to that time I had worked only part-time, but now at once I started to work full-time. I had the idea I couldn't stand life without my family unless I worked as much as I could stand. In the Jewish community in Munich they needed every bit of help, because after November '38 nearly all the men had not only been taken to the concentration camp at Dachau—most of them were released after some months—but they had lost their jobs and had great difficulties to maintain their families. So help was needed badly. It was partly organising help, partly helping with money, and there were still people in Munich—Jewish people—who could help. But not only Jewish people tried to do as much as they could. Many Christians helped their Jewish neighbours when they saw them in distress.

Soon there was found special work for me to do. I got a little office in the building we now used for the whole of the Jewish community. The former house, built for this purpose, had been taken away by the Nazis, and we now had to use a disused Jewish factory. With the help of partition walls, we got enough

offices for our purposes. I found a very nice young secretary—Emmy—intelligent, efficient, very good typist, interested in the work, always willing to help me wherever she could.

After November '38 our Jewish community had become bit by bit a thoroughly organised state within the State. We had our own labour exchange. Many men and women were employed with different tasks in the community. They had to find out exactly how many Jewish houses and flats we had still left for our population in the city so we could know where a spare room could be given to people coming in from the suburbs or other parts of Bavaria. They had to prepare the ration cards—each one with a big "J" on it—and issue them each month. We had a special shed in the courtyard with our own clothing department, stocked by second-hand clothing of all sorts from Jewish people who had emigrated or died. All of the clothes had to be cleaned, sometimes mended, sorted and marked for size. Two men and some women worked there, full-time and part-time. Perhaps I should also mention our own emigration department. It would take too much space to tell the whole story of this organisation. The main thing is it worked well, and after the first weeks of chaos our people were fairly well provided for, and order was restored.

Just after the war had begun, all the Jewish population of Baden had been evacuated. They had to leave because it was too near the French frontier. They were divided among different towns and cities of Germany, and Munich got 350 of them. It was my task to put them into the homes and flats of our Jewish population in Munich. It was not at all easy because even then they were fairly cramped. Many Jewish flats and houses had had to be surrendered to the Nazis, and the people had to move into other Jewish homes. I had to try to put these Jews from Baden with other Jewish people where they best fitted in. This was not easy to do; I had to join orthodox Jews to other orthodox Jews, and so on and so on. Furthermore, I had to make sure that they got their food, and as all food at that time was already rationed, this was another problem. Then they hadn't much luggage; they had had to leave their homes in such a short time that it wasn't possible for them to pack all their things; nor were they allowed to take much

luggage with them. So there was the other problem of clothing them, which was difficult, because all clothing was rationed also.

But Emmy and I managed quite well, and I liked doing this work because I was quite independent; it was work that did not depend on any of the other social workers. Also, I got to know many of our Jewish people in Munich whom I hadn't met before.

Besides that, I had the supervision of the three homes for our old people; part of this I had done before, after November 1938, so that it wasn't new to me, and was the sort of work I liked very much. I knew the directors of these homes already, and knew it wouldn't be difficult for me to work with them.

This went on till the end of February 1940, when the first deportation of Jews from the German Reich started. It was from Stettin and its district, and we learned fairly early about it because the Rabbi of the whole district deported was the brother of our young Rabbi. He and his parents (who lived together in Munich) got a card, which a German soldier must have posted, to tell them about this happening. About a thousand men, women and children had left their homes on a very cold February day—I think it was the 20th or the 22nd of February, 1940. They were allowed to take a suitcase with them; otherwise only the things they had on them. The suitcases were collected in a special goods carriage, and they themselves were put into cattle-trucks. For three days and nights they went through the whole Reich to Poland, which at that time was already taken over by the Germans. Soon we got to know more about it; letters came telling us that they had been put into the houses of very poor Polish Jews in three little towns near Lublin. Many of them had died of cold and of other diseases during the journey.

When I heard about this, I decided we had to do something to help them, and I started to send parcels to them—parcels of only about four pounds were allowed—and at first we were not at all sure they would arrive where we wanted them to. We asked the people to whom we addressed the parcels to write at once, so we would know whether they got them or not. Surprisingly, very soon we got many letters, which helped me to

organise the whole thing. Apparently people hadn't got their suitcases, so they only had what they themselves had on their backs. So we were asked to send them not only food, which they were very short of, but clothes, medical instruments, medicines, crockery, cutlery—in short, all the things you need to keep a family. The Jewish population in Poland was not at all pleased when they got all these people sent in; they couldn't understand them even—they spoke Yiddish and Polish, and both these languages were strange to our people. They had different customs, and even our most orthodox Jews were not taken as such by the Polish Jews, who were more orthodox than ours.

I asked all my colleagues in the Jewish community to collect things for the parcels. Not only that; I asked my very good German friend, Anna Marie, who was a Quaker, to help me. Without her help, it would have been impossible to go on. Nevertheless, it was very difficult because we were forbidden to send parcels; so we had to do it illegally. We had a Gestapo Superintendent for the whole of the Jewish community, and he made frequent inspections, always quite unexpectedly. But I had a telephone, and as soon as he came to the building, I got a call telling me, "Visitor here." We had a very big wardrobe in my office, and two writing desks with drawers, and as soon as we heard that the Gestapo Commissar had come to the house, Emmy and I put *everything* into the wardrobe or into our desks. We had a quite reliable kitchen scale to weigh our parcels—this and everything else disappeared in a minute, and when the Gestapo Commissar entered our office, which he always did, I would be dictating a list for the Gestapo telling how many of our people had moved from one house to another, or other things like that. He never even suspected our goings on.

We had to learn quite a lot of things about how to do our parcels, because the first ones were opened, and some things were taken out. We knew then that we had to make all the things look old, not nice; we never sent a pair of shoes together, only one shoe in one parcel and the other one in the next one; we took apart our medical instruments and put one part in one parcel and so on; we scribbled on the crockery to make it look old and ugly, and so on. You can understand it took quite

a bit of work besides the other work we always had to do.

But my main object was, besides sending all the necessary things for our people, to write to them to let them know that we were near them, that we would do all we could to help them, that they were not just left to themselves. And I got back many letters telling me how necessary it was to keep friendly contact with all of them. I found quite a number of my colleagues who were very willing to do the same thing; every one of them got some special addresses to keep a near relationship with the people in Poland. It was surprising how many things I got for the parcels. After some months, we were fairly sure our people in Poland had at least the most necessary things to survive. I had asked them over there to delegate some people from each of the three towns, so that we didn't send to each family, but to this group. I thought it would be much better for them to divide the things we sent to the people who really needed it most; they knew their needs better than we could. Secondly, we were able to fill our parcels to just the amount that was allowed. We could even send money, There was a regulation that on a German passport 20 marks, I think, could be sent every month to a Polish address. That was made quite easy because German soldiers and people of the Civil Service of the occupied country stayed with Polish people in their homes. We got quite a number of German people who helped us; some sent their own money; we could provide the money for them if they didn't have it. The necessary thing was to have their addresses and to know that they were ready to send money to Poland on their passport.

We had got to the point where we sent every week about a hundred of these parcels, which was a lot of work. When the summer came, I remember that Emmy and I went to the market in Munich, where old clothing was sold, to get them summer clothing because it was as hot in Poland during the summer as it was cold during the winter, and our people hadn't any light summer things to wear. We even had to send things for newborn babies, and we were very sorry we couldn't pack them as nicely as we wanted. But then, if we had, they wouldn't have got them. All these things we learned during the time we did the work.

I could do even more. I could travel to other German cities to ask people in the Jewish communities there to do the same thing. We didn't know how long we could go on sending parcels; we always had to expect that the Nazis would stop us. We wanted to be sure that then other cities stepped in. I got people from Frankfurt, Mannheim, Stuttgart, Berlin, Dresden, to send parcels as well. To arouse their special interest, I took with me all the letters I had got from people who had received parcels, because I had had the experience that though you might know about what was happening in general, you were really interested when you heard directly from real persons what they suffered, how they lived, and so on. I could provide them with all the details of plenty of families living over there.

The money for the things we had to buy came partly from our Jewish people in Munich, partly from German friends. My Quaker friend provided us with plenty of money which she collected from her circle of friends, neighbours, and acquaintances. I remember one specially nice little episode: there was an old German gentleman who once visited me in my office, and said he had heard of our action to send parcels to our friends in Poland. Would it help us if he provided us with the necessary wrapping paper and string? That *was* a great help, and we never were short of that. You can imagine how much we needed to pack these small parcels. Others were ready to take our parcels to the different post offices, because it was impossible just to use one post office for many parcels at once. I think all Munich post offices got a number of our parcels to send off. It never happened that we were asked by the Nazis or the Gestapo officers what we did in this special field. They *never* suspected it existed.

The letters from Poland reached us all through the next two or nearly three years. They stopped just before Easter, 1942. Till then they came regularly. I must say how sorry I am that I had to destroy all of them; it would have been much too dangerous for all of us in the Jewish community to keep them. Now they would have given an extraordinarily real picture of what had happened then.

We learned more from this experience. I personally was fairly sure that more deportations would follow. We wanted to

be prepared for that. My Quaker friend and I made a special list of the most necessary things to take with us when it would happen—to pack what we needed most in a rucksack to keep on our backs, and in a sort of bedding-roll with two blankets, slippers and a nightgown or pyjamas, and a spoon, a fork and a knife, and, if possible, a little cup and a plate. The list told people to put on at least two sets of underclothing, and as many frocks or dresses as they could possibly wear. I mention this now because this list helped us later on very much; we were glad we had prepared it in time.

The second deportation I have to mention took place when our people from Baden went back to their homes. They left Munich and the other cities in the Reich in the Spring of 1940, and the deportation of all of them started in October 1940. They didn't go to Poland; they went to the south of France, the unoccupied part of France at that time, to the so-called Camp de Gurs, near the Pyrenees. Again we started to send parcels and to write, and we got replies from them as well. I always had the feeling that our people there were not as badly off as they were in Poland. We knew that the French people were kind, though our people found at first extremely hard living conditions. We learned that the Jewish population from Alsace and Lorraine were to have gone to the unoccupied part of France. Then the *Gauleiter* of Baden and the Pfalz had thought it a very good opportunity to send his Jews as well, so that instead of the number of expected Jews, it was nearly doubled, I think, and nothing was prepared for them.

There were in the south of France some camps originally used for Spanish refugees from the Civil War, which started in '36. Now these camps were empty and were put into use again for Jews. I don't know very much about what happened to the Jews there; I only heard that a number of them emigrated with the help of, I think, Swiss or Swedish Red Cross people. When the Germans took this part, the rest of them, I believe, were deported to Poland, but I don't know it for a fact.

I've told this episode in so detailed a way because, as long as I got these letters from Poland and France, I was quite sure our people lived; they were not murdered. And, though sometimes I had the suspicion that the Final Solution would

come, I was never sure of it. As long as we knew our deported people were living, even under the most difficult conditions you can imagine, we tried to do outwardly all that the Nazis wanted us to do, just to prevent them from having the excuse to murder us.

During all this time I went to Munich from Icking every day with the first train in the morning. I got up at half-past four, tidied my room, had a bit of breakfast, and then left. I came back in the evening at about seven o'clock. After that more work had to be done; we had to prepare our main meal, do housework, write letters, etc. The friend who still lived with me soon got quite a number of children to teach and help with their homework, so that she could contribute to our keep. We managed together quite well. This lasted until the beginning of July 1941.

Then the Nazis decided that it was a crime for Jews to live outside the town of Munich. They summoned me to their headquarters and, with insulting expressions to which all of us were by that time used, they told me I had to be punished for living outside the city. I at once had to find somewhere to stay in Munich itself, and to go to work in a big factory outside the town, a factory which they themselves owned. It was a flax factory.

I found in one of our homes for old people a little room under the roof where I could stay. It was a very long trip from there to the factory—one and a half hours in the morning, and one and a half hours back at night by tram and train—and eleven hours' stay at the factory. We started work at 7.15 in the morning. Almost on a first view I could see it was a very badly managed factory.

When I came in, I went to an official standing there at the gate and asked him where I should report to start work. He looked at me and said, "Why do they send us such old hags?" I said, smiling, "I can't tell you that. Please ask the Nazi officials." He didn't answer anything. He told me to go to one of the barracks to change my clothes. I had brought a very large straw hat, a cotton frock and sandals, because I had learned from others who worked there that we were standing in the sun without any roof over our heads. After I had changed, I found

the foreman waiting for me to tell me, "I am bringing you to a group of women sorting flax." We went for some minutes through a big area where on both sides I found real mountains of old flax bundles—many as much as a year old. And then we came to a sort of horseshoe arrangement of tables. The table in the middle was occupied by a machine which bundled the sorted flax. The machine was worked by a French prisoner of war. At the sides were two other tables where women received unsorted bundles from other prisoners of war; bundles which were just as they had been delivered a year before by the farmers. We had to open the bundles, testing them to see if they were still intact—if they broke, they were useless; and then make them into equal bundles to go into the machine which put some cord around them. From there they went into the factory.

I found a group of six or eight women of different ages and classes—all of them Jewesses, all of them much younger than I was. One of them—the wife of a bank manager and a very friendly, kind person—showed me how to do the work. I liked the others as well; they all were friendly persons. Being quite alone in the open area, we started to talk to each other. I had been warned beforehand not to speak to the French prisoners of war, but I soon found out that we all talked with them together. They were not at all keen on working, which we could well understand; we were not keen on working either, but we had to do a certain amount of it, and sometimes we had to ask the men that brought the bundles from the mountainous heaps to be a bit quicker, because we had already been without any work at all for quite a time.

It was easy to talk and to work in a leisurely way, because the man at the machine could look over one side of the whole area, while we faced him and could look over the other. So we could warn each other if anyone was coming. The three foremen who came to supervise us were called by the colour of their hats—the grey hat, the white hat, and the green hat. The green one was the youngest and the nicest; it was easy to get on with him. The two others were not at all friendly and kind; and we, as well as the prisoners, were very often scolded. We didn't mind very much—they couldn't do very much to us. I very soon

learned that the Munich Labour Exchange didn't send any German workers—men or women—to this factory; they were so badly paid (we found that out very soon) that the Exchange just declared they wouldn't give them any more workers. That was why we were employed, and the poor prisoners who couldn't say they wouldn't work because of the poor pay. I'm not quite sure that the prisoners got any payment at all; I know what we got—I brought home every week about twelve shillings, for work that lasted eleven hours a day six days a week.

We were delighted that so many bundles of flax had to go on the rubbish heap because they were quite useless. It was not a nice piece of work we had to do. When we opened the bundles, we found inside stones, dead mice, rats. Very often the whole thing was so slimy and dirty that it made us sick. The farmers delivered their bundles and got paid by weight, so if they put stones inside, the better for them. The bundles then went on to one of the heaps along the area, and were left there for months and months—ours must have been there nearly a year. It was very dirty, unpleasant work; after some minutes of it we had a thick layer of grey, stinking dust on us. I never shall forget the sort of bad smell. It was bad for the lungs, and we coughed and got very thirsty after a little while. We had one break only —at midday for half an hour's time. We could get some curdled milk, which helped a little bit against the thirst for a moment, but couldn't still it when we started to work again.

Staying and working there for the whole day under the very hot, burning sun was another unpleasant aspect of the work. During the first day I was so badly burned that I developed a high temperature; nevertheless, I tried to go on because I still hoped that my relatives abroad would find some sort of emigration for me. But after three weeks, my left arm (which is half lame) couldn't stand the work any longer; the nerves in it were badly inflamed and hurt so much that I couldn't go on. Our kind foreman—the green hat—saw that and said, "You are not feeling well, are you?" I said, "No, I don't feel well." "Stop the work," he said, "Go to the doctor; get a certificate—it's much too hard for you to go on. This work is only meant for young people—not for older ones."

My comrades were very sorry when I left—the women as well as the prisoners, with whom we had got very friendly indeed. They did one thing for us: the summer of '41 was perhaps the worst time because the Germans went from victory to victory and we had nearly given up hope that the Allies would win the war. All our French prisoners never despaired. Though they were treated badly—they hungered, and though we hadn't much to eat, we gave them what we thought we could spare—they kept up our hopes; they were always cheering us up, telling us, "You mustn't despair; don't give up hope; we are quite sure the Allies will, after all, win the war."

When I went to the doctor, he at once said I was not able to do factory work. I was not sure how the Nazi officials who had ordered me to this factory would take the certificate of the doctor. But, to my great surprise, they accepted it. That was before the end of July '41. In the beginning of that month the second ghetto had been created. At that time Munich was, as far as I know, the only city in Germany where nearly all the Jews had to leave their homes and were concentrated in a sort of camp which in fact turned out to be a ghetto. Wooden barracks were erected and fenced in around a big quadrangle, where about a thousand Jews could be fitted in. The Nazis measured the space everybody was allowed by inches.

In the summer of '41 the Nazis had started another ghetto because this first one was not large enough. They took away part of a nuns' convent, which was in a pleasant suburb in very nicely kept grounds, and had a high stone wall around it and a lovely little baroque church. The Nazi officials ordered the Jewish community to name the Jews who should lead this Ghetto. For the leaders in the barracks they had made the choice themselves. Now they found it more convenient to let the Jewish community name them. Our chief asked me to take the domestic lead and to look after the women. He had already named three men for the other managing jobs. We were not meant to give commands, because we were not allowed any full-time household employees. All the 320 inhabitants, who included men up to seventy-five years old and women up to seventy, had to work in ammunition factories, or other factories important in some way for the war. Only people whom the

Nazis thought useless or too old and not able to work, were allowed to work in the "home"—as the Nazis called it.

It was a pleasant house, built by the nuns for their old people, when they were too old to go on working any longer as nurses in the Munich hospitals. From the convent the Nazis took away half of the basement, the whole ground floor and the first storey, but left them the second storey and the other half of the basement. We were forbidden to communicate with the nuns, which was sheer silliness. We used the same stairs, the same corridors, and so on. The nuns never passed us without a friendly word of greeting.

Before we moved in this house had no kitchen, no dining-room, and not enough washing basins for so many persons. We, the four leaders of the Ghetto, were told by the Nazi officials to make the plans for the necessary installations. But first let me say a word about the other leaders. The oldest and therefore the *primus inter pares* was a teacher who had been without a job since November '38, when all schooling for Jewish children had been forbidden. He was a very decent, kindly man, but utterly impractical. I am sure he had never in his life done any household or kitchen work. The two others were about forty years old, friends from their schooldays onwards, and both very practical. I could not have chosen better men for the kind of work we had to do. About one thing we all unanimously agreed: we wished to make life for our inhabitants as pleasant and easy as possible. We would be firm in the matter of cleanliness and order, but we would try our utmost to do it with patience and friendliness.

I was not used to going to church. I read the Bible and found it quite enough for the time being. I did not—and I still don't—believe in dogmas. I thought that God was far too great to insist on dogmas to be believed. I felt it much more important to try to live up to the preachings Jesus had given, to love God, to try to love your neighbour as yourself. Only part of our inhabitants were really religious. Some of them took their beliefs so seriously that they tried to live up to them, and they were a great help. They and a number of humanists helped us to form a real community.

Many of the orthodox Jews at first were angry that we were

forced to live in a nuns' convent. They didn't like to mix with Christians. They had always avoided any close social contact with them. They had kept themselves to themselves as much as possible. Now the nuns were so friendly they just had to respond. The nuns invited us to visit their church whenever we wanted to, knowing that we were not allowed any kind of divine service. During the first weeks of our stay there the orthodox Jews refused, but after a while they liked to visit the church. They had learned the nuns were real Christians, who did what their religion taught them to do. They found out that love was the main thing—that love could help people of different faiths to get together, to become real friends.

The nuns did more things for us. I never had any difficulty getting what I wanted for my old and ill people, in spite of the many restrictions on our ration cards. We didn't get the same rations as the other German people, but we always received from the nuns what was necessary. That also helped to form a very good relationship between ourselves and the nuns.

It was very hard work I had to do, and from the twenty-four-hour day only a few short hours were left to rest. During the worst time I found out that poems, parts of quotations from the Bible which I thought I had forgotten, helped very much. I had never realised before that poems were more than a very enjoyable kind of art. That they really could sustain you, lift you up in a special kind of way, I really hadn't known. You have to know them by heart. They come in those moments when you need them, and I was very lucky that I have got a good memory for them. All the things I learned as a child out of the Bible—almost the whole Sermon on the Mount, verses out of psalms and from other parts of the Bible—these were stored in my mind already, and they came to my memory when I needed them. I very soon found how much they helped me. I think I realised for the first time in my life that they not only give you pleasure; they give you strength.

In September '41 another heavy blow fell, one of the worst things for the Jewish population of Germany at that time. We had to wear the so-called Jewish star on a piece of dirty yellow material with a black star and the word "Jude" in the middle of it. Every Jew—man, woman and child from six years

onward—had to wear it, not only when they went outside their houses, but on every garment in the house itself. We all experienced what it meant going through the streets of Munich wearing the sign of a pariah. Many of us managed it by putting on a sort of mask; our faces were like stones. I had my nose high up in the air; I looked through people without seeing them at all. I didn't want to see them. It seemed to me the only method to go through it, by avoiding looking at people in the streets. It is a terrible experience; even now I still find myself in the streets of Birmingham looking through the people instead of at them, and suddenly remembering this is utter silliness and not necessary.

Though my work was exhausting and without a real break, I believe I could have gone on doing it for a long period. But there were two facts which made that impossible. The first was the strain of frequent surprise inspections by Nazi officials. The second was much more terrible: the deportations from Munich.

The first deportation from Munich started in the beginning of November, '41. How it happened is still clearly painted in my mind. Two of the three male Ghetto leaders and I were summoned to our chief's office in the Jewish community building, where we found assembled the directors of the old people's homes. We did not know why we were summoned. After being told the reason—that 800 or 900 Jews were to be deported, among whom were to be eighty-five inhabitants of our Ghetto—I found myself frozen stiff with horror. And I saw all the others who got similar messages stiffen and become deathly pale. We all realised then: this was the beginning of the bitter end for all of us. Again we were sworn to keep it all secret until the list with the names would reach us. On our way back we were unable to talk; but at the gate, the colleague I liked best murmured: "I wish I were one of the eighty-five to be deported; it would be so much easier to tell them, 'Look, I shall go with you,' instead of giving them the message that they are ordered to leave us." This was just what I felt. I could only nod my consent.

What followed was like a long nightmare; the evening with all our people at home, expecting us to tell them why we had

been summoned (we had agreed to give some administrative reason for it); the next morning, a Sunday, when the list arrived and I had to tell the women concerned—for all of them a blow out of the blue; the supervision of the packing of the few belongings they were allowed to take; the preparation of the provisions for their journey; and finally, the heart-breaking goodbye, when after two days the bus took them to the barrack Ghetto where they were all assembled before the train took them away. We learned later on that this deportation went to Lithuania. We never again heard a word from them, though they all had promised us to write. It made us suspicious, but we did not know then that they had been murdered.

We were given a breathing spell till Easter-time, '42, when the next deportation from Munich started. This time seventy-five inhabitants of our Ghetto were involved, and we leaders of our community were amongst them. It had become a real community in the best sense of the word by then, as we wardens in the beginning of our work had wanted it to be: it was a unity of all these different 320 persons, different in their religious beliefs, in their standards of living and working, in short in their whole outlook on life. With firmness, but with kindness, compassion, and patience, with the loyal support of many inhabitants, with the help and friendliness of the nuns and other German friends, and last but not least—in my personal belief—by the guidance of God, the task was achieved. This does not mean that there were no difficult customers to deal with, that cleanliness, order, and harmony were easy to maintain, that no petty quarrels had to be settled. Naturally enough, we had again and again to cope with all that; it was part of our work. But what made it easier was that we could make even the most difficult and resentful person understand the sword of Damocles which was hanging over each of us, and which could be borne better if we were united in a friendly atmosphere than if we lived in disagreement or fruitless resentment.

The deportation started—it always started—in the early hours of the morning, when nobody was around, because even then the Nazis didn't want the ordinary German people to see it. An ordinary bus—another precaution of the Nazis—took us from our yard to the Barrack Ghetto. There the 800 Jews,

men and women, were assembled before we had to board the train to Poland. And I remember very clearly, in the afternoon before, we all were assembled to a sort of dress rehearsal. Fifty women spent two restless nights crowded in a small room. It had sawdust and wood shavings on the floor which quickly became horribly filthy with the mud on our shoes. Then in the afternoon we were told to assemble in the large bare quadrangle between the barracks. Everybody had to learn exactly his or her place for the walk to the train. The inhabitants of our Ghetto tried to keep together. The Nazi officials were all there, and hoped to see a sort of entertainment—wailing and whining Jews, begging for help, asking not to be deported, not to be separated from members of their families, and so on and so on. Nothing of this sort ever happened. Our people had a sort of dignity and calmness which made my heart overflow with love and respect. The Nazis never saw what they wanted to see. Amongst ourselves something of this very often happened—you can imagine that—but never when any of the Nazis was present. I heard later that the Nazis soon left, apparently disappointed.

But when we were assembled and sorted out—you know, for every carriage in the train, and we tried from our little community to keep together—my name was called, "Rosenfeld! Jewess Rosenfeld! To the Gestapo at once!"

So I went to one of the smaller barracks where the Gestapo and the Nazi officials were installed, and there I found an older inspector, telling me. "You don't go. You stay." I didn't know what to answer. I was now quite prepared to go with all the people from our community. To leave—no longer to stay behind and always tell them they had to go. It was much easier to say, "I go with you," than tell them, "You leave all the things behind and you go now."

I was bewildered. I had the feeling that my past life was closed, and a new, hard, difficult chapter was to start. But without any near relative left in Germany for me to care for, I wished to share all the future hardships and dangers with the people whom I knew and understood, who trusted me and knew I was their friend. So I said, "No, I don't want to stay. I go." The inspector said, "There's nothing you can do about it.

You have to stay." I learned later on from our Chief in the Jewish community that the Nazis had suddenly found out they hadn't got any people left to lead this Ghetto in which we were, and had decided to leave me behind because I could look after the domestic work better than the others.

I went back from the Gestapo Barrack and was at once surrounded by my friends asking, "What did they want?" I was hardly able to answer, but they understood from looking at my face with tears streaming down which I could hold back no longer. I still don't know how I lived through the next minutes. All the repressed sorrow and anger, the leaving behind of all they loved, the threat of the unknown future, it all broke from them. They hugged me and shook my hands. Some murmured blessings, others swore. But it was quickly ended by a harsh command: "Back to your barracks, all of you."

I found myself alone just long enough to collect myself and think "What next?" Looking up, I saw our Chief approach. "I've got my car at the gate", he said. "I've telephoned my wife. She expects us both and you'll stay the night with us." Then he added kindly, "I know what you feel. You need some rest badly. You'll stay some days with us before you go back to your work." I felt like being in a dream. Evening had come, a lovely spring evening. Soon I was sitting with Direktor Stahl in the comfortable car which the Nazis had allowed him to hire for special occasions. We drove through the well-known streets which I had thought I would never see again, and I found myself greeted by the friendly Mrs. Stahl, and guided into the one comfortable furnished room they were allowed to keep for themselves. To see beautiful glass and china again was like Fairyland. Suddenly I realised that now I would be able to write to my husband, that I was spared what seemed the hardest thing of all, never to write to him or hear from him again.

This deportation went to Poland, to three little—very little—towns there, the same towns where the Stettin Jews had lived since February 1940. Only a few weeks before our deportation started I had had letters from these people. But in the meantime, unknown to us, they had disappeared, and we never heard again. This we learned only from our own people after they

arrived. During the first six weeks we got some letters and some cards which German soldiers in Poland must have posted, for they themselves were not able to do that. But after the first weeks we never heard a word again and we wondered what had happened to them. We didn't really know at that time, but we learned in July, 1942. They were all killed, quite a number of them were shot, the others had to go into the gas chambers and were killed that way. That would have happened to me. I was quite sure of that.

I came back to our ghetto which the Nazis called "home"—but it wasn't a home, it was a ghetto—on Easter Sunday, having missed the deportation where, by the way, all my things went. I never got them back—we never got our luggage, and I went back having nothing. And when I went back into my little room, which, I must add, I didn't have for myself, but shared with three other women, I found my room full of presents—dresses, underwear, flowers and plants from the garden of the nuns, put there by my people. It was really amazing. And all the people in the ghetto were so glad to see me again, because after we had all gone there was a rumour that the Nazis themselves would take over the management of the ghetto. They knew that would be a horrible thing. They could imagine it from the inspections by the Nazis we had constantly had. They always took place by surprise, at any hour of the day or the night.

The people who inspected us were most of them either adventurers or little people, who never could have got a decent job before. Now they had so much power that they didn't know what to do with it, and were greedy always for more of it. And, you know, the greed for power, I think, is one of the ugliest things in mankind, and you find it nearly everywhere where people have power over others. I knew that our Nazi officials hated me specially and I think the reasons were that they didn't want women to be efficient—women were a minor sort of creature. So of course they didn't want a Jewess to be efficient because they were even less than that—they were worms.

I told you before that all entertainment, including even music and divine services, were forbidden. I organised them

nevertheless. I knew that our people needed that as much as they needed food. When they came home from a very long day's work exhausted, worried, nervous, they needed to be taken out of themselves. We had some musicians amongst our people—a very fine pianist, a trained violinist, a 'cellist—so we had some chamber music. And I could do that easily because the Nazis had ordered that at least once a week, during the evening, I had to have a sort of roll-call. I had to assemble them in one large room, to find out if all of them were there, and to tell them about new commands and restrictions which the Nazis had told me. This was just the sort of gathering in which to give the entertainments; and we were helped by the big walls surrounding our house and by the precaution that we always had to have some watchers—some guards—so that we could be warned before any Nazi officials could enter our house. Every one of us had his or her special job, to put something away, so that nothing was visible when they entered. They found us all assembled, and they saw me standing before them taking the roll-call. They never discovered anything else.

Though the Obersturmführer who mostly took the inspections always had his hand at his belt with his revolver, he never took it out, and I very often wondered why. He came once for a sort of inspection, and he wanted to get into one room where two of our young people lived. They—girls about sixteen years old—worked in a factory, as all of them did, and they had just come home from work. I called them, and stood with them beside him.

"What is your religion?" he asked them.

"We are Jews by religion," they answered.

"Are you full Jews?" he asked.

"No," they said. "Our father is not a Jew. Our mother is Jewish." Then he turned to me and said, "Isn't that a crime? Here are children who could have been Christians, who could have got out of all the restrictions here, and they have been brought up in the Jewish religion."

"I can't answer you that," I said as I shrugged my shoulders. "It's not my business to answer questions like that."

"Well, you will be deported," he said as he turned away.

It shows a little bit how muddled was his sort of thinking.

Because they were Jewish by religion, the racial side this time didn't matter; suddenly the religious side mattered. But I think he just turned it as he wanted it—he didn't think about it, though he was by no means an unintelligent person. He had the most incredible memory for faces. A face he had once seen he never forgot, and that was dangerous for us. Very often he found people—Jews—who tried to hide their sign—the star of David—and he found out at once and punished them very severely.

I remember one special occasion when he found me with a number of other people from our ghetto on a Sunday afternoon in summer. He was in an affable mood, which I thought was more dangerous than when he was just a vigorous superior. We were in the garden, and he said to me with a smile: "I would like to have it as nice as you have it here." We showed stony faces, nobody moved a muscle, and he looked round and said: "If I am friendly I want to see friendly faces." I was so furious that I went up to him and shouted back, "You can command what you want in practical things. You have no command over the expression of our faces." I checked myself at once because, you know, to show temper might be dangerous not only for me, but for all the other people. But he didn't say a word. And then he muttered, "If I had only found that you had done some little thing that was forbidden, that would give me the right to punish you, and I would kill you at once." That was a funny thing for him to say—he didn't need any justification for doing that—there were no rights for Jewish people left, and none of the other Nazis would have minded in the least his shooting me.

I told you before that after a while nearly all of our people visited the little church of the nuns. It was a lovely little church, baroque, and very often visited by tourists. We all loved that church; we found peace there, and we could pray there. All of us—even the orthodox Jews. At first they disliked it because they disliked Christian churches. But they got used to going to this one.

We had a horrible incident at one of the inspections by the Obersturmführer—it was a bad inspection, he hurt quite a number of people by beating them and I could do nothing to

avoid it. I hoped we were at the end of it when suddenly his girl-friend shouted from the car in which she was waiting for him, "You had better go to the church. I have seen one of the Jewesses go in there." So he went in there at once, and I followed him, because I wanted to see what was going to happen. He went in, and there was one of my old inhabitants sitting there with another woman, talking in whispers. He was standing in the doorway and he didn't go in. He just shouted, "You come out here." They came out, and he asked, "Who is the other woman?" My friend answered him, "She was my maid for a long time, and I just wanted her to have some of my belongings." So he shouted again, "Out you come." In the courtyard he let the other woman go, but Mrs. Sterne was standing before him, and he slapped her face, I don't know how often. At first I couldn't move, but then I went between them—I thought, "Now he might just hurt or shoot me. I don't mind at all." But he stopped and looked at me and said, "I have to punish her hard," and "You send her tomorrow morning into my office." I said, "I shan't do that, because tomorrow she will be deported, so that's that." He turned on his heel and raced back to his car and went away. You know, what struck me was that he didn't slap her in the church. I think he didn't dare to do that.

Some of the higher-up Nazi officials were devils—real devils, they were. The power they had been given had made them devilish. I got very often furious with them—I must admit that —but I didn't feel hatred. I felt very aloof from them. I didn't feel them as persons as I was myself. I think I never did, and I believe that might have helped me. I felt I had a sort of moral ascendancy over them. They were not people like my friends; they were a special sort of people on another level. They were much more like incorporated—embodied—evil. They had gone so far that I don't think they could come back to humanity—to real human feelings.

You had all kinds of Jews in our community. You had very orthodox ones, you had liberal Jews there, you had agnostics; but you had as well Catholic and Protestant Jews in the ghettoes, and before the Nazi time, or perhaps before the war came, they didn't mix very well. Now, being concentrated in

ghettoes, they had to mix, and that was one of the difficulties with which we had to cope.

You know, our ghetto accommodated 320 persons—160 men and 160 women. The men were all together on the ground floor, where all the rooms were measured in inches. A small room meant for one old nun accommodated six of us in berths one over the other, very crowded. At first, when our people moved in, we were able to sort out the ones whom we thought would fit and be friendly together. Later on that was impossible, and I quite remember that every evening I had at least one hour when they could all come with their little quarrels and difficulties, and bring them before me and ask what I could do about it. There was one thing which helped. They knew that if they quarrelled too much, and if everything became disordered, the Nazis would take over. That they didn't want.

I believe suffering brings out in people what's already latent in them. Quite a number of people become better because of suffering, but a very great many can't take it. They don't accept it, and they get worse than they were. I experienced both of these kinds in our ghetto. There were quite a number of people who were nearly saints. They got very near indeed to saintliness. But there were others who were really difficult and we had quite a number of tough customers. I had to be very strict with these. They were a real danger to our community, but all the others helped to put them in order. People can easily degenerate through these sort of difficulties in everyday life. On the other hand, we tried to find even there, in everyday life, little pleasures and things we still could enjoy —flowers—birds. I shall never forget standing for a minute at the window of my little room, overlooking the church tower. It was evening and the swallows were circling around it; and I saw the nuns walking in procession peacefully through the garden amongst the trees. Little children helped us to enjoy laughter and play, because during the last month when I stayed in the ghetto we had some children there as well—children from the age of one and a half to fourteen. They were the last Jewish children left over in Munich and even they were deported and killed later on.

NINE

UNDERGROUND

I WAS ALONE IN charge of our ghetto from April '42 onwards, and very soon—every week indeed—a deportation took place and I had to tell the people on the list they had to leave. It was a terrible thing and, you know, I couldn't stand the strain of sending people to their death, which, I have to tell you, I didn't quite know for certain until July. Before that I knew that I was sending them to an extremely difficult, primitive life, a life deprived of all the little things which make life a bit easier and more pleasant. I knew they would find nothing of that sort in Poland or even in Theresienstadt. But I didn't know except for the last six weeks that I was in the ghetto of Munich that I sent them directly to their death. I couldn't get insensitive to that—it was impossible. It harassed me through night and day, and it exhausted me and made me ill.

I couldn't forget what happened to them. I saw them all going to the gas chambers, and I had friends amongst them—very near friends. But after I had been told by the Obersturmführer that he saw I couldn't go on working because I was at the end of my strength, I realised quite clearly my name would be on the next list for deportation to Poland, and that meant my end. In any case it meant the end of my being able to help the poeple I loved in the ghetto. I was not able to go on doing the work and administering it. But I knew that I still had a responsibility towards my family, though they were so far away. Before that I had denied myself even the thought of escaping. But now I was prepared to listen to the proposal of two of my German friends, the one who lived with me in Icking, the other a friend from my student days. They had already found a cousin in a suburb of Berlin who was prepared to take me into her and her husband's little house. All the preparations had been made. Even the train tickets had been provided.

The day before I escaped from our ghetto, one of those

inspections by the Nazis took place and the Obersturmführer came and stood outside of the house.

"Jewess Rosenfeld," he shouted. "Out you come at once." I came and he said "I am taking you to prison at once."

I was nervous, knowing that I was planning to escape the next day, and I did not think before I answered.

"Well, do it," I shouted back at him. "I shall be only too glad to be in prison."

He looked at me surprised. "What's the matter with you?" he said. Just that. Nothing else.

But I had grown calm, and I asked him "Why would you like to take me to prison?"

"Because I have found out you have bought meat without permission," he replied.

"I would never do such a silly thing," I answered. "I can quite easily prove that that's not true."

And I could prove it. But, you know, his response was a funny one. At once he became a bit human—he wasn't used to this sort of thing coming from myself, and he wondered why I talked like that. He didn't ask any further questions—he just was furious that I could prove that nothing wrong had been done, and he walked away. That decided me. Before it happened, I had become doubtful and afraid of the great risk I would be taking. I wondered whether it would not be better just to let things go on. Now I knew they couldn't.

The Mother Superior of the convent, who had given my friends the opportunity to meet me in their visitor's room, and had seen me take my luggage there—it was not much then—had put two and two together in her mind. She sent for me in the late afternoon and, with her serene smile, she said, "I don't know where you are going or when, but I know that our prayers will follow you, and we are quite sure you will win through. It will come right in the end." I can't tell you how that helped me. Now I suddenly was convinced I would succeed. Next morning, on the 15th of August 1942, I took the train from Munich to Berlin. At the main station in Munich, I went to the cloakroom and there I took off the so-called Jewish star and put it in my handbag. I couldn't throw it away, that was impossible,

and I could not throw away my Jewish papers, but I put it all in my handbag and it travelled with me to Berlin.

My friends had travelled between Munich and Berlin a number of times, and had told me that every time there was a sort of inspection by the Gestapo on the train. Everyone had to show his or her identity card, so there was a great danger that that would happen to me, and I hadn't got any paper which I really could show. My Jewish paper would get me at once either deported to Poland or killed. The funny thing was—which I hadn't known beforehand—that it was the end of the Prussian holidays and the train from Munich was so overcrowded that no official could get through it—it was impossible. The corridors were full of trunks and passengers, and travellers often had to get in or out through the windows.

My cousins were prepared to take me in their little house on condition that I would only leave the room which they prepared for me when they told me to; that I wouldn't go near the window; that I would never answer any knock or ringing of a bell; that I wouldn't wear shoes, but slippers, to make no noise at all; that I wouldn't, under any conditions, try to get in touch with former friends or acquaintances. It was a very difficult thing to do. Now I was no longer really occupied all the time. I had too much time to think, and these first months were the bleakest and the blackest I lived through—more difficult even than in the ghetto where I always had lots of things to do and to think of—where I hardly ever had time to worry about my own anxieties. Now I had time enough. The actual progress of the war at that time tormented me too, because it was still the time when the Germans were winning victories, even in Russia, and I couldn't see how the Allies could win the war.

You know, I can really say that if I had known that I would live illegally and underground for nearly two years, I would never have done it, because living underground is a terrible thing. There are no words to explain it. Living under the shadow of death all the time—that was something which, especially after the war started, you don't mind for yourself. You get used to the imminence of death, you accept it, it doesn't matter very much, because the things you have to live

through are very often more terrible than death would be. But knowing that living underground would mean danger to all the people who helped me, and their families—would mean death for them—is a thought which tormented me through days and nights.

There was another thing too. During the years before, I could communicate with my husband via Portugal, where a sister-of-law of ours lived. She very kindly forwarded our letters. We were allowed to send a monthly short message to a neutral country. Now, living underground, it was impossible to send any more letters at all, and my family over here were convinced that I was deported and perhaps dead. And I knew that my husband would take it very, very badly. You know, I could never think of it as an ordinary sort of life in an ordinary nice home that I was living. I felt myself surrounded by prison walls. It was fear for all the people around me which tormented me. I had many sleepless nights, and if they were not sleepless there were always bad dreams—nightmares—when I found myself confronted by Gestapo men, who examined me and cross-examined and tortured me. I didn't know how long I could stand up to this sort of thing before I would tell them what they wanted to know. You know, I had seen the consequences of torture myself. In 1933, when we lived in Berlin, I kept one man for a number of days and nights in my bath because of all the wounds he had got from the Nazis. He couldn't stand or sit or lie, other than in water, so I knew quite a lot about the things they did to people whom they cross-examined. It's difficult to understand how you can go on living under such circumstances, but I found out that the thought of self-preservation is one of the strongest instincts men have in themselves. You don't know how much you want to go on living, if you have got a goal to live for. And I had got that.

I lived with my cousins much too long—for about four months—and then they got so nervous that they told me I had to go—they couldn't stand the risks of keeping me hidden any longer. I had promised that, if I stayed with them, I would not try to contact any of my friends. I had kept my promise during all the months I was hidden with my cousins. So now I did not know how to find any other accommodation quickly in Berlin.

At last we decided to ask the friend from my university days, who had helped me to escape from the Munich ghetto, to visit us for the next week-end.

My friend came from Weimar, where she lived and was a teacher. She set out at once to try to get me other accommodation, and other friends, whom she contacted, helped. One of them had worked for a man who owned an optical factory. It produced an instrument of his own invention which was very important for the war. This man was an extraordinary man and very much loved by those who worked for him. He was called "Uncle" by all his employees, and she had been for a long time his private secretary in the factory. She afterwards had gone to another job, but she still helped him with the monthly accounts and always kept in touch with him. When she heard of my difficulties she telephoned to him and said, "A friend of mine needs some help. Can I bring her to see you?" And he said, "Yes, by all means, come at once." And that was the first time I left the house after four months, and it was a funny feeling to be again in the streets, and amongst other people. I now experienced for myself what many prisoners had told me was their feeling when they were free to walk in the streets after their release. I was glad when I was no longer alone, but in company with my friend, and together we went to Uncle Karl's house.

He was a friendly old man with kind eyes. He made us sit down.

"Now tell me," he said, "what's the difficulty?"

"She has been living underground," said my friend. "And I know that you have been looking for a housekeeper. Would you perhaps be able to take her in?" And she told him about my experience.

"Yes," he said at once, "Why shouldn't I? I've been looking for a housekeeper for a long time." Then he turned to me and said, "Would you be ready to move in at once?"

"Yes. I could do that," I replied, "but there is more to it. I haven't got any ration card, I have to tell you that. And you know of all the difficulties and all the risks that you take."

"Oh! I know all that quite well," he said and laughed.

"I don't mind the risks. I take them gladly. You see, I'm an old man (he was sixty-seven), and I hate the Nazis. I did so from the very beginning. And I think the best thing I can do is just to help the victims as much as possible and take the risks as they come. I think them worth taking."

Nobody who has not lived in Germany during these years can imagine what I felt at hearing him speak like that. But what he did next was still more surprising.

"Don't worry about the ration card," he said. "Let me show you something. You ought to see the flat before you move in, so please come with me."

We went along a corridor—he took a bunch of keys out of his pocket and unlocked a door—and I found in that room a store of all the things I had never seen for years—sacks of coffee, cocoa, tea, sugar, flour, wine, chocolate, soap—good soap—it was really like Aladdin's cave. He turned towards me, smiling, and said, "You see, there's nothing to worry about your feeding —I can do that very well. I wouldn't engage a housekeeper before I knew that I could provide for her, so that's quite all right." He had lived through the First World War; he had known then how difficult the conditions were about food and all that; so before the Second World War started, he just bought what he could, and stored it all.

Then I told him I had got a very badly faked identity card, with the name "Mayer" on it, which was a very common name, and he said, "All right, I shall call you Mayerkin. That will do. I don't want to know your real name; much better that I don't know it. And you call me Uncle Karl, as all the people do." So that was that. He lived alone in that flat—he was a bachelor—and I moved in two days later—and at first I had the idea it was heaven after hell.

But that didn't last very long. I still didn't go out of the flat—that was too dangerous, but I wouldn't have minded very much, because I was glad that I had plenty of work to do. I had to spring-clean the whole flat thoroughly, and darn Uncle Karl's household linen and underwear. But I was only alone for, I think, about three weeks. Then four other people came to live underground with me, and that was really extremely dangerous. We all knew how dangerous it was, and we all tried

our best to find other accommodation, but that was very difficult.

It took me about three months before I found other friends, who at once told me they wanted me to stay with them. They were old friends of ours. But they told me, "As soon as possible, you have to leave Berlin." I knew that they were quite right. Berlin was very dangerous for people living secretly at that time, because the bombing had started again on a great scale, and everybody was compelled to go down to a shelter. Nobody was allowed to stay in their flats, and doors had to be kept open. This was to let the wardens get in and find out whether anybody tried to hide there, or anything was wrong. Because I was without any valid identity card, I always stayed hidden under a big couch during the air raids. And I always waited for the warden to look under the couch with his torch. Fortunately, he never did, but we couldn't know how long that would go on.

These friends of mine tried to get me good false papers, for without them I could not leave Berlin. The puzzle was how to get them. Of course, they had to make enquiries very carefully. But in the end this is what they found out. Many German towns had already been bombed very hard. Their police records had been destroyed, and the checking of identity cards was hardly possible. As the bombing went on, women and children were voluntarily or compulsorily evacuated. Many of them had lost all their belongings, including all their papers. To provide them with some sort of certificate, main post-offices in the towns could make them out one. Without some official document, passport, or identity card nobody could get a registered letter, or money from a postal order. When the friend, with whose family I was staying, learned about this opportunity to get valid papers, she told us of it, and we worked out a plan together with her grown-up daughter and her son.

They would separately—each time under a different name and address—send me a registered letter and a postal order. I was the only one in the flat during the day, when they were all at work. So I would open the door to the postman—or postwoman in our case. I would start a friendly chat with her, telling her that I had arrived from one of the worst bombed industrial cities of the Rhineland after I had lost everything I

possessed. Even every document was burned in the shelter from which miraculously we had all escaped. She was very friendly and full of understanding.

"I tell you what you can do," she told me, "to get your money and your letter. You can easily get a post-certificate."

Then she asked me whether I had got my birth certificate.

"No," I said, "that was burnt too."

"Never mind," she replied. "I know from this letter here that you are Miss Martha Schroeder. I shall identify you. Let me see. I can't do it tomorrow, but the day after that I can. At eleven o'clock I shall meet you at our main post-office. Here is the address. You will go to Room 8. Tell the clerk there who you are and where you come from. Say that Gertrud Schmidt—that's me—knows you and delivers your mail, but can't hand you your money or any registered letter without a document. Then the clerk will call me, and I shall gladly identify you. By the way, you must get some passport photographs, one for your new card, one for the post-office register. The card will cost you a sixpenny stamp and it will be sent as a registered letter to this address the next day. With it I'll bring you your other mail. Nowadays this card is as good as a passport. We are only allowed to tell people like yourself in special need, so as to avoid deserters and criminals knowing it. But I am glad that I can help *you*."

I thanked her heartily. I still could not believe we had reached this wonderful solution. I got my photos, and all went just as Mrs. Schmidt had told me. Three days later I was in possession of a beautiful certificate with the stamp, with the Führer just under my picture!

I can tell you, it was not always easy for me or my friends to remember who I was. I had been Mrs. Amanda Mayer at Uncle Karl's. Now I was Miss Martha Schroeder. It is amusing now, but then it could be dangerous. Fortunately, I had a nickname which did not have to change. When Peter was a very small boy, he could not say *Mutti*, which is the common German form of *Mummy*. He called me Buddeli, and very many of our friends continued always to call me Buddeli, so that I could always sign Buddeli, whatever was supposed to be my name.

Now I had my papers and was ready to go to Freiburg, where friends wanted to take me in. It is a beautiful old city in the south-west of Germany, and not very far from Switzerland. It had not been bombed at that time. But before I left Berlin I went back to Uncle Karl's house, to tell the other people—three of them still lived there underground—how I got my false papers, and that it was fairly easy at that time. I especially wanted to tell Lotte the way to get my sort of identity card. I knew that so far it had been impossible to provide her with any sort of certificate at all. My friend had telephoned to let them know I was coming. It was a nice, sunny, May afternoon. Berlin looked at its best at that time, and I know I enjoyed this walk to Uncle Karl's house. I had got papers and I wouldn't say I felt free—but I certainly felt freer.

I found the "family," as we called each other at Uncle Karl's house, together, but without him himself. He was still working at his factory. I would like to describe the "family." Susie, who had been there when I was living there, had already left. She had succeeded in getting a real identity card made up at the Police Station of the City District where she had spent her whole life, just before a letter came to her telling her about her forthcoming deportation. She had then gone privately to one of the police officers, telling him frankly of the danger in which she was, and he had taken the risk to provide her with the necessary documents. With these she had been able easily to find work in a factory, and a room with old friends of hers to stay in.

Lotte was my own age, in the early fifties. She was, as I have told you, without any papers at all. Friends of hers, who knew Uncle Karl, had asked him whether he could take her into his flat. He had agreed. Lotte—nobody knew her surname—and I were looked at as the mothers of the others, who were very much younger than we were. They were a married couple. Herbert, in his middle twenties, was a skilled optician. He had worked in the Zeiss Works in Jena as long as the firm was able to hide the fact from the Nazi officials. When it became impossible to hide him any longer, one of the managers had asked Uncle Karl, known as an opponent of the Nazis, if Herbert might work in his factory in Berlin. There it would be easier to disappear in a crowd. But after a while he found it

dangerous to stay in the small flat which he and his wife had found. Their neighbours were ardent Nazis. So the couple were always afraid of some denunciation or other, or even of official enquiries into them.

Uncle Karl, when told about this, at once decided Herbert and his wife, Eve, should leave the flat, as soon as they could do so unobtrusively, and stay with him. He decided also that Herbert should stop work in his factory as well, and do some work at home. His plan for Eve was this. She was about the same age as Herbert, and very beautiful and charming. She could get about easily, and he sent her to all his many connections to see if it was possible to get them both from Germany to some other country. He promised that he would pay expenses, for he was fairly wealthy. Both of them had got identity cards with the names and addresses of two of Uncle Karl's employees, which enabled them to move about. Eve did this freely, Herbert only if it was unavoidable, because for men of military age it was riskier than for women. Up to the end of May 1943, I know that, in spite of all Uncle Karl's connections with people in Sweden and Switzerland, they could find no way to leave Germany. There was one other person there, a young man whom I knew to be both German and Jewish, but I did not ask who he was. One did not ask about people's real identity in our circumstances. He was introduced as an Italian prisoner, and he was really doing some work for Uncle Karl, not hiding in the flat.

Once a week Uncle Karl had for years employed a charwoman to do the necessary scrubbing. So every Wednesday the whole "family" had to leave the flat for all the morning. We had to hide our belongings in locked cupboards and chests of drawers. It was always a nervous time.

On the occasion when I went to say goodbye to them Lotte prepared coffee, and we talked gaily together, and then suddenly the bell rang. At that time, that was the worst thing which could happen, and I still get a shock when unexpectedly a loud bell rings—but it was terrifying then and we all sat, frozen stiff. There was another man, not living there, but working for Uncle Karl on that afternoon, and we didn't at first know what to do. But then I said, "We have to open the door.

We don't know who is there, but we have to take the risk." And the youngest of us, Eve, went to open the door. She found a tall policeman standing there. As soon as the door was opened, he stepped in.

"Is there a back door or another entrance to the flat?" he asked.

"No," said Eve; "there isn't."

"I have to look through the whole flat," he explained, "and I shall want to take all your papers."

"But we don't own the house," Eve answered. "We don't live here. It's a Mr. K. who lives here."

"Oh, I know that," he said, "but that doesn't matter. I can explain all about that later. But first let me see the flat."

Eve went with him; we others stayed behind, and Lotte, who had got no papers at all—the others had got false papers, not very good ones, but she had got nothing,—was very much troubled, and was trembling. She said, "Can I get out?" I said "No, you can't. That would be very suspicious. We all must stay. We have to try to talk now as if nothing happened."

So we tried our hardest to appear like harmless guests, and then Eve came back with the policeman. He stood facing us and said, "Your papers, please." Eve had got a good false paper. She showed it him. It was the paper of one of Uncle Karl's employees. She showed that, and her husband another one which had belonged to one of Uncle Karl's employees. So that was all right, and the policeman wrote it all down and gave them back. But the other two hadn't got good papers—Lotte had got nothing at all. Eve smiled at him, nodded towards Lotte and said, "And you know this is my mother." She certainly looked old enough to be that, and the policeman never had any suspicions at all, so he said nothing about it. In fact, before he could say a word, Eve went to Herbert's friend, explaining, "Giovanni here is a colleague of Walter's, who is just mending Mr. Karl's record player. He is an Italian—a forced labour man." "Giovanni, have you got your identity card?" she asked. "*Si*," he answered. I think it was nearly the only Italian word he could speak. He gave it to Eve. The policeman took it from her, looked over it, and gave it back. Then I took my new, very nice identity card, and gave it to him.

Before that I had already said, "But won't you take a seat, it is very uncomfortable to stand and take down all the notes; so better sit down." He sat down, already mellowed and more courteous, and he took down our addresses.

After he had seen all our papers, he got up and said in a friendly way "I'm very sorry I had to come here and disturb you at this nice gathering." We had told him we were friends of Uncle Karl, waiting for him to be with us—"But you know, we at the police station have got vague information that Mr. K. has a number of Jews living with him here in his flat, and that, you know, is forbidden. It is not necessary for me to explain what a serious crime it is. I have known Mr. K. for years, so I am very glad to prove there is nothing in it." He bowed and left, forgetting even to give the Hitler salute!

We were sitting there after he had left with our knees trembling, trying to think out what would happen next. I said, "Let's stay here together for at least another half-hour. Let's not telephone Uncle Karl. You can tell him when he comes back. After half an hour's time I will leave the flat; I will look up and down the street to see if somebody is still waiting for us. Then I will go to the next underground station, just opposite the house, and use the telephone there. If all is well, I will say to you, "I want to say 'Goodbye' because I'm going to a journey!' Then you will know it's all right. But the best thing would be if at least for some nights you could either stay in the factory or go somewhere else."

I went back to my friends and they were very much shaken about this experience. They found another friend of mine to house me during the next two days before I left for Freiburg. Nothing happened. The policeman was quite convinced that the accusations against Uncle Karl were all rubbish, and I reached Freiburg without any mishap. I stayed there with a very nice family. They were Social-Democrats like ourselves, and we had known them for years, though not very intimately. Edmund was a journalist, who worked at first in Berlin, and then, during the years just before Hitler, in Munich. He was one of the political editors of the Social-Democratic newspaper. As such he was well known to the Nazi authorities and had been taken to prison quite early. But he had been released. He could

count himself lucky at not having been taken to a concentration camp.

His wife, Lotte, was many years younger than he was. She left Munich with their small boy for her home-town, Freiburg, where his brother still carried on with the printing business founded by their father. The whole County of Baden, in which Freiburg was situated, was known as being—to put it mildly—very reserved in its attitude to Nazi policies. So Lotte had no great difficulty finding a job for her husband as a minor civil servant. They were great friends of the Berlin family with whom I had last lived. When they learned of the growing danger of people like myself living underground in Berlin, because of the increasing bombing, they offered at once an asylum in their flat.

Freiburg had become *Judenrein*—free of all Jews—a long time before. The Jewish community had already been deported in September 1940 to one of the camps in the south of France. So the Nazis could be trusted not to believe any Jew would dare to start living again in this area. I think this point seemed to diminish the risk which the whole family took. Their boy was thirteen when I arrived in June 1943, a nice, friendly youngster, well brought up. I was amazed how frankly both his parents expressed their deep aversion against the Nazis. I knew with what utter caution other German parents tried to hide their opposition from their children.

They were afraid of the strong influence at school, and in the Hitler Youth Organisation. They were compelled to join this when they were ten years old, boys and girls as well. It could make them wish to betray their own parents, and even hand them over to trial and punishment. You know, there were plenty of rumours, true or purposely sent round by the Nazis themselves, which told of such terrible happenings. You could hear them everywhere. I remember that on the first evening, after Rolf had gone to bed, I asked his parents about this.

"Don't you think," I asked, "it might be too heavy a burden for such a youngster to hear you again and again stating your judgment on Nazi deeds, contrary to all he learns at school and in his Youth Organisation?"

"No," answered Edmund quietly, "we both are convinced

that parents who have their children's full confidence should return it by telling them why they abhor the Nazi policy. We know all the difficulties he has to master. He, however, knows he can always find us prepared to answer questions, to explain what he cannot understand, even to make it absolutely clear to him why he must keep silent about all we tell him. We are quite certain that we make it easier for him in the long run not to be taken in by the empty phrases, the promises of a fools' Paradise for the Aryan *Herrenrasse* with Germany at the top, and the whole blasted hypocrisy."

Can you understand that my heart went out to them at once, that the foundations of a great friendship were laid then and there? It was a friendship which still lasts. And what he said about their attitude towards their son's political and ethical education proved right. Rolf never did suffer from the feeling of despair after the bitter end of the war, he never lost his footing, as did the greatest part of the German youngsters of his generation, when they found themselves deceived and robbed of all idealistic beliefs.

Soon I found plenty of work in the little household. Lotte had a part-time job as secretary in an insurance company, which took her away from her home during the whole morning every weekday. I could do most of the cleaning of the rooms, the shopping and cooking. Apart from this, my main task was helping Rolf with his homework. He had difficulties at school and, until I came, no one had had time enough to cope with them. I liked the thirteen-year-old boy from the first moment onwards, and was glad I could help him with other things beside his homework.

In our spare time we went out together to pick berries and, later on, mushrooms, to collect fallen fruit from the orchards of the farmers—they were usually ready to give permission for this—and things like that. For we needed this extra food urgently. The rations had already become very scarce in 1943. Rolf, at his growing age, felt always hungry. I remember, when once we came back from the woods with sixteen pounds of edible mushrooms, he begged his mother: "Let's eat as much now as we really can, and only dry the rest. I would like just once to feel full up." His mother smilingly agreed.

I stayed in Freiburg for nearly a year. In October '43 we listened to a wireless programme which came—we learned this afterwards—from England. It was very cleverly done by refugees in Great Britain, and they were very well informed. They sent news every hour from 8.40 p.m. till midnight. We listened to it because it came on German wavelengths—very often on different ones. We had to look for them, but that was less dangerous for us to listen to than, for instance, the British radio. I heard in this way that the Gestapo had just issued an internal message, telling that there lived underground in Germany about 100,000 persons. Among them were 4,000 to 5,000 Jews; the rest were political enemies or deserters from the armed forces.

Because I lived underground myself, I knew very well that I never could have got ration cards if someone had not printed them for me illegally. Actually the head of the printing works—German printing works—which did this was a Frenchman. I knew that. The ration cards were not forged. The German operators of the machines that printed the cards let the machines go on after the official number had been printed. Only one page of the ration cards had a special number, and extra ones of this page could not be printed. But all the other cards could, and they were the important ones. They were for butter, for fat, for meat, for vegetables, and so on. Only the card for noodles, rice and oatmeal was the one with a number. But this we could do without quite well. I'm sure, you know, that the factory I was told about was not the only one that did things like that. I think there were many others.

I stayed in Freiburg much too long a time. To live underground in the same place for nearly a year is a dangerous thing, and I became more anxious and nervous every day. I was not afraid for myself, but for my friends, who risked their lives by helping me. But all my search for another place to go to was in vain. I knew my friends in Berlin were trying their hardest to help me cross the Swiss frontier. But it was a long time before any news came about the way to do it.

TEN

ESCAPE

At the end of April 1944, at last my friends found a sort of band who smuggled people over the border—Germans living there, very near it, who were earning lots of extra money by doing it. These people agreed to accompany me over the Swiss frontier. A young friend from Berlin had arranged it all and came personally to Freiburg to bring me to the first station of my journey. It was the 20th April, 1944, Hitler's birthday. We left Freiburg early in the morning and went by train to Singen —very near to the Swiss border. We were very early there because we wanted to take no risk of an air raid which could delay trains. But nothing happened and we had lots of time before the man who should meet me appeared. The hours were endless, really. It was agreed beforehand that I shouldn't take any luggage. I could have a small rucksack on my back. I shouldn't wear a hat, but just a scarf around my head and, as a sign to find me out, I should have in my hand a broom, of all things. But at that time in Germany nobody was astonished to see such things—people couldn't buy things any more, so you travelled with the most peculiar sort of things in your hands or as your luggage. In the shops there was nothing left to be bought.

It was agreed that I should meet the man, whom I didn't know, near the station in Singen. He would be there, and would give me a little sign to recognise him. The rush hour in the afternoon was chosen for the meeting, and a stream of workers came down the steps from the station where I stood. At first I couldn't see anybody at all who might be the man I expected. But after a while I saw a very small man leaning against a fence opposite the station and I thought I just saw him wink towards me. Shortly after that he left the fence, and went very slowly and casually along the road. I followed, and then I thought my heart stood still, because the same man passed me going back. I didn't know what to do. I knew I couldn't follow him again,

so I very slowly went on. And then the man came up again and passed me and went along in front of me, and then I knew he was the right one.

He went outside of the little town, where only meadows and fields were left, and there he stood still and waited for me. Then he said, "The password!" I said the password, "Xavier"—it's an unusual Christian name. Then he added, "I know you are the right sort of person. You did the thing very well. When I went back again, you didn't follow me, you went just on, so I think we can risk it." Then he said, "Where's the money and the other things?" My friends had collected 3,000 marks, but money wasn't worth much at that time in Germany. So they also had to find some bed linen, table linen, and men's clothes as well—then very precious articles—and we had left two big parcels at the left luggage room at the station. I gave him the envelope with the money as well as the tickets for the luggage. After that he said, "All right; you meet me at 9 o'clock at the station, and I go through the barrier with your and my ticket. We have to go a little while by train." I asked where to. "It's not necessary for you to know that," he answered. "Be there punctually." He left me. I thought: "Now he may never come back again."

I went back to a little inn near the station, where my friend waited for me. She wanted to stay the night in Singen because the people who accompanied me over the border would take back my papers—my false German papers—as a sign that I had reached Swiss territory. The hours went very slowly, but at last it was time to go to the station, and my friend went with me. She took a platform ticket and we saw the little man already waiting there. He went before us through the barrier with our tickets and we followed. We went along a long platform. It was a very dark night—nine o'clock in April is very dark—and it was drizzling and, you know, we had no lights on the platform because of the air raids. It was difficult to find the way, but at last we found a small local train at the end of the platform, just three carriages and a little engine. The little man was waiting for me and said, "There are lots of people around here which I don't like to see. It's too dangerous for me to get in here. I go by cycle, and either at the second or the third station I

shall get into the carriage where you are. You get in now."

I said goodbye to the young friend who had so loyally accompanied me. She soon vanished in the utter darkness and my past life seemed to vanish completely with her. Slowly I boarded the train. Again I thought the little man might just leave me. The train started. The carriage was quite dark and fairly empty. What I would do if the little man didn't come back I had no idea. I simply had to wait. He had given me my ticket, but I couldn't read to what station it was made out; it was too dark. So I just sat there and waited. The guard came to look at our tickets. He took mine and didn't give it back.

After a while he returned and asked me, "Where do you want to get off?" I answered, "At the third station." I couldn't say anything else. I was glad that he went. He didn't seem to find it peculiar that I didn't name the station. At the second stop the little man didn't come, but at the third he came and sat down opposite me. I told him the episode with the guard and he replied, "Oh, that doesn't matter." Just then the guard came back and said, "But didn't you want to alight at the third station?" "No," said the little man. "It was an error. She asked me and I told her she must leave at the terminus." Again the guard went without saying a word.

We left the train. The little man told me, "We must wait here for the second man to take you further on." Very soon he appeared. The little one asked him, "How are things?" The second answered, "Bad," and nothing else. The little man gave him the envelope with the money and left us without another word. The second one, very tall, turned to me. "We must walk down this road through the village and further on. It will take about an hour's time. I'm going twenty yards before you and I'll hold my cigar behind me from time to time so that you can see I am still there." He went. I followed him. It seemed an endless walk. We passed through two villages which I couldn't see but I heard the lowing of cows and the barking of dogs. I saw the burning end of the cigar. Suddenly, for a long while, nothing was to be seen. I was quite alone, "That's the end," I thought.

I stood stock still. I thought, "If the man comes back, he can only find me if I stay on the same point where he has left me."

And after some while—I don't know how long it was—he came back.

"I was looking for the third man who should have accompanied you to the border," he said. "He hasn't come, I think he found it too dangerous. I can't go further with you, but I will just show you the way."

I didn't say a word.

"We have to leave the road now," he said. "Give me your hand."

I did. He helped me over a fence, and I found myself on a grassy slope. We halted.

"You can hear a little brook down there," he whispered, "you must walk for about an hour along the slope above it. Then you will find the Swiss Custom House on the same slope, and on this side of the brook. Before that, on the other side of the brook, is the German Custom House; but probably you wouldn't see it, because they don't show any lights."

"But I can't go on by myself," I protested. "I've never seen what the place looks like. It's so dark I can't see a thing. It's impossible to find the way."

"I don't care if you do find it impossible," he answered. "It *is* rather impossible. I must tell you that you have to get right in to the Swiss Custom House. Just before and after it is German territory. The Custom House is on the top of a sort of triangle."

"It's impossible to get to such a place," I told him.

"I don't care," he said. "Give me your papers."

I gave them him because I couldn't do anything else. He left me without a word.

Very slowly I went on. All that time I had the feeling I was walking between two worlds. I wasn't on the earth any more—I wasn't anywhere else. I just went on, slowly. It didn't take me long before I fell—very softly. It didn't do me any harm, but I lost my handbag and in that I had the last things I treasured—a little photograph of my husband and my children, an alarm clock, a fountain-pen and this sort of thing,—yes, and one golden bracelet which I thought might help me in Switzerland if I ever got there. I had no money at all and nothing else of value. I tried to look for my handbag, but I

didn't want to turn because I knew if I lost the direction I was lost for good. So I left the handbag. It didn't matter really. I had lost all my other things so that didn't matter very much. I went on, slower still, and more carefully, I thought, but after a long, long time of walking I fell again. This time I fell very hard on a stony sort of courtyard. Cement it was, concrete, and I knew it was made by man and I thought, "To this sort of courtyard there must belong a house." I didn't care any more whether I was in Germany or in Switzerland. I knew only I couldn't go on. I was so exhausted. And beside that, my left foot was broken.

So I shouted, "Hallo," but they had already heard the fall in the little house and I saw a man with a lantern coming towards me. I shouted again, "*Bitte sagen Sie mir gleich wo ich bin?*" ("Please will you tell me where I am?") And he must have heard from the sound of my voice that I was in distress. So he shouted back, "*Seien Sie ruhig. Sie sind in der Schweiz. Warten Sie, ich komme.*" ("Don't worry, you are in Switzerland. Stay where you are. I am coming.")

I had fallen into the courtyard of the Swiss Customs House.

ELEVEN

REFUGEE

I HAD REACHED MY GOAL. I had escaped death and Germany and all the humiliations I had been through. And very soon the Customs official, with another colleague, came to carry me into the house, and there I found the Customs official's wife awaiting me. They made a sort of lie-down on the wooden bench in the office with pillows and blankets; and the very nice wife said, "I make you some coffee and bring you something to eat." The Customs official said, "I have at once to telephone a doctor and the police, and then we have to decide together what to do with you. You can't stay here during the night," and he added, smilingly, "If you hadn't had this accident we would have put you into prison because, you know, you have crossed the border illegally." I answered, "I know that and I wouldn't mind being put into prison." "No," he replied; "in your condition we wouldn't do that."

The doctor was the first person to arrive. He came in a very short time.

"You know," he said to me, "you fell about nine feet on to a stone yard. That you haven't broken your neck is a miracle I can't understand. Now we have to get off your boots"—I was wearing mountain boots—"and I shall have to cut them."

"No," I protested to him, "you can't cut them off. I need them."

"But you can't stand the pain," he said, because already my foot and leg were swollen.

"I can stand the pain quite well," I replied to him. "And perhaps you can give me some sort of injection to relieve it a bit. But it doesn't matter. I must keep my boots."

So he gave me a morphia injection, and with great difficulty he took the boot off.

Meanwhile, the policeman had arrived and helped the young doctor. Together with the Customs official, they discussed what to do with me. Presently the doctor said, "I know what we shall

do. I will ring up the owner of a taxi in my village, and ask him to drive Mrs. Rosenfeld to the County Hospital in Schaffhausen. That is the nearest." They all agreed, relieved that a good solution had been found. Soon a big car arrived. They very carefully put me in, and we arrived in the middle of the night at the hospital in Schaffhausen.

I only know that two women carried me out of the car into a little room, and took my clothes off. I heard one of them laugh, because I had not got on just one set of garments, but everything I possessed. I had several dresses and at least three sets of underwear. That was the only way in which I could take my clothes with me. But at that time I was so thin that so many clothes were not at all noticeable.

The next morning a grim old doctor came into the room where I lay on a camp-bed. It was Dr. Billeter, the Senior Surgeon. Very angrily he said, "Now tell me quickly—what's the matter with you? You are not an emergency case. You've got your broken leg splinted, as I've learned, so you could have stayed wherever you were." I told him briefly my story, and he at once became very friendly. He said, "Let me examine you." And after he had done so, he added "This broken leg God Himself has given you, because almost everything is wrong with you. It will take a long time to get it right, but we here will do our best." His outward appearance was gruff, but I found him very kind-hearted and always ready to help.

During the afternoon I was moved into an annexe of the hospital—a very nice newly built chalet with smaller wards than in the big old building of the original house. I was brought into a ward with only six beds—one of them became mine. All the women in it were kind and sympathetic, very keen to find what a strange bird had come into their ward, curious about my experiences, and never tired of listening to all I could tell them. But you know, it is funny how little things become important. There, in that beautiful and clean Swiss hospital, I was so ashamed of my hands I could not bear to bring them from under the bed-clothes. They were black with grime which took a long time to wash out. For we had no proper soap in Germany. It did not clean you. Then I did not have to worry: we were all like that. But here it was very different. I felt ashamed.

I was very restless during the first days, because I had heard many stories of people escaped from Germany who had been sent back there, and I was afraid the same might happen to me. My doctor was worried about my not relaxing, and after some days, when my temperature stayed higher than normal, he again had me brought into his surgery to question me.

"What's the matter with you now?" he asked. "Why don't you relax? What are you so restless about? The nurses tell me they never find you asleep."

"There are two reasons for that, Doctor," I told him. "First I am not sure that I won't be sent back to Germany."

"Now, just you trust me," he replied. "I would never allow that. They could only do it over my dead body. What's the second reason?"

"You know, I haven't a penny of my own here," I confessed. "So who will pay for my stay in hospital?"

He laughed at me. "Don't worry about that," he said. "You know, we Swiss are very good business-men. We are quite certain that Germany will lose the war. When the peace treaty comes, we will ask for reparations, and get back all we have paid for refugees like you. There's nothing for you to worry about. Are you satisfied now? Please try and relax."

I really was relieved, and after getting back into my ward, I tried to be quiet. I got better after that, and soon I was allowed to have visitors, though when my friendly nurse told me that, I said, "But I have nobody here who knows me. How should I get visitors?" She said, "You wait and see. There are already some people who have been waiting to visit you." Then I learned that my story had been told in the Swiss papers, with the headline, "The Refugee Who fell into Switzerland." They had even reported that I was originally from Berlin, although how they learned that I don't know.

At the next visiting hour there were five emigrants who came to see me—a couple and three women—and they very kindly brought me a number of things I had not seen for years: oranges and other fruit, Nescafé (which was a precious thing), and other things. They said, "We want to greet a fellow-Berliner, and to tell you how glad we are that you escaped. Now tell us all you would like to have." I told them my story

briefly and they were very interested. One of the women then said, "Look here. You must have somebody to help you. We have in Switzerland some organisations to help refugees from Germany and, if I remember rightly, your name is not strange to me. I'm a Social-Democrat. Wasn't your husband a Member of Parliament?" I said, "Yes, you are right. We are Social-Democrats, and my husband was a Member of the Prussian Parliament." "All right," she said. "Then it wouldn't be a Jewish organisation we would ask to help you, because you would be looked on as a political refugee. It would be the Workers' Rescue Organisation which would help you as it is helping me. If you will allow me, I will write to them and tell them that you are here." I was very grateful to her, and she wrote.

Not many days later a welfare worker from the organisation came to Schaffhausen from the headquarters in Zürich. I shall never forget when she came directly to my bed and said, "I bring you the love of all our people in Zürich, and I'm told to tell you that you are not lost any longer; all the help you need you will get from us." I couldn't help weeping; it was too much.

They kept their promise; they really helped in the most generous way.

When she saw how moved I was, she at once became practical and said, "Now, here's my notebook. You tell me what you need. First, I think you need some money. I'm sure you want to send some telegrams to your family." (I had told her that I had been separated for long years from my husband and children.) I asked if she could send a telegram for me to the relative in Portugal, because at that time I had no idea of the addresses of my husband or children in England. She promised to do that at once from Schaffhausen. "What else can we do for you?" she asked. There were only small things I wanted, but I got some money from her, and she told me I could expect a regular sum as long as I was in Switzerland. I was greatly relieved after this visit. I didn't feel so alone after this nice girl had come to tell me that there were people who had never known me, but who nevertheless were interested in helping me. She did more: she ordered a regular newspaper for me to read so as to keep me up to date on all that happened in the world.

The other refugees in Schaffhausen brought me books; lots of things I could never learn in Germany I could now learn. But I couldn't read the whole day, and I couldn't always be telling my companions about my past experiences. I tried to make them talk about theirs. One of them, an ex-nurse, told me about her experiences before she came into hospital. She had nursed an old man until his death; it was in a place high up in the Swiss mountains. Then she suddenly turned to me, as if a new thought had come to her.

"There is a very nice German Pastor over there," she said. "Perhaps you would know him."

"That would be a great coincidence," I said with a smile. "But tell me his name."

"Pastor Michaëlis," she replied.

"It isn't a very unusual name in Germany," I had to say, and I asked her, "Do you correspond with him?"

"Yes, indeed I do," she replied, "and I would write to him at once. He is always writing to me."

"When you do," I said, "ask him if he was ever the Pastor in the prison for young offenders in Kottbus. If he was, then I know him well, and I would like to hear what has become of him."

She wrote on the same day and two days later I had a reply telling me how glad he was to know that I escaped. He had tried in vain to find where my husband and I went after we left Berlin, but he couldn't find out. He went on: "I would like to help you—to get you away from being sent to one of the large internment camps for refugees. I shall try all I can to get you into my rectory."

He had lost his job in the youth prison; but not only that—he couldn't find another one in the Lutheran Church in Germany. So he went to Switzerland, where he had quite a number of friends among the so-called religious Socialists. Some of them were to be found among the rectors or parish priests in Switzerland. They told him that he, not being married, could easily get a job as a parish priest in one of the very poor mountain villages. Many of these villages hadn't had a priest for years, because a Swiss pastor with a family couldn't live on what such a poor parish could give them. My friend went to the place where he now lived and at once was accepted

as the parish priest. He told me his village had only 150 inhabitants. Not only did he hold the services, but he also taught Scripture to the children at school, and did the same things in a neighbouring village. He asked me to write back to him to tell him more about my family and my own experiences before I came to Switzerland.

This was another great piece of luck for me—to find an old friend where I never had thought I would.

But to get me as a guest in his rectory was not as easy as we thought it was. We found that, as a private person, he would have to pay a deposit of 10,000 Swiss francs—about £1,000—before he could take in a German refugee. Then my refugee organisation stepped in. When I told them about the difficulty, they at once wrote back that they, as an organisation, had permission to give a guarantee for emigrants to stay with private persons. They would do so in my case. But they did more: knowing how little the parish priests in poor villages could earn, they offered to pay for my keep there and, besides that, give me some pocket-money.

But I have to go back to my stay in the hospital. I stayed there three full months. A month before I was sent out as better, the police telephoned to my doctor, telling him he was keeping me back without real grounds for it—they meant medical grounds. Dr. Billeter was extremely angry. He was furious, he told me, and had replied, "All right, if you think that, you come today, with a car, to the hospital. Bring two men with you, because you may have to carry her. I shall send one of my nurses with her, because her heart is not at all strong." They came, and the men carried me into the car, and when we left the very nice garden of the hospital, my nurse said, "You know, this poor woman never has seen anything of Schaffhausen. She has only been in the hospital, and came there at night. She has never left the hospital grounds." So the men said, "All right. We will show her Schaffhausen first, before we go to the police station." And they did—they drove me sightseeing to some nice buildings which they explained to me—churches and so on—and after, I think, half an hour's drive, we landed at the police station. There they took my fingerprints—they photographed me from all sides, to get me a sort of refugee pass, and

then I was told: "Now you have to go upstairs to our chief, to be examined." My nurse said, "She can't get up the stairs by herself. One of you has to carry her. But before she can go at all I must give her an injection for her heart. Please leave the office." They did, and afterwards one of the men carried me upstairs, and I came into a room where there was a superior officer. He was not at all friendly.

I found all the ordinary people in Switzerland extremely kind and helpful. I couldn't say the same of the authorities. My experiences with the alien department of the Schaffhausen police, as well as later on with the Zürich police, were very bad. I had to undergo a two hours' cross-examination, which couldn't have been much worse if it had been the German Gestapo. He wanted to find out the names of the people who helped me to cross the border. I didn't give way; I told him I knew nothing. He wanted a description of the two men who had accompanied me from Singen. I told him I only knew that the first one was small and the second one was tall, that was all I knew. I was much too excited to know more. I didn't want to tell him more, though I could have done so.

"All right," he suddenly said. "But look here. If you would tell me the names of your friends who helped you, perhaps later on there might come an occasion when we could help them."

"No!" I answered. "If anybody later on has to help them, I am the person, not you. I won't tell you any names."

"Very well," he said. "We'll leave it now. But I tell you that I know the people who brought you from Singen quite well. I know that three days after you left they accompanied a husband and wife, who tried to cross the border just at the same point as you did. They were all shot—discovered and killed."

I thought it was bluff, but I kept quiet, though I was deeply shocked. Later on I found out it was the truth. They were all killed. No more got out that way. I was the last.

"If you know them quite well," I said to the officer, "why do you ask me about them?"

He didn't answer; he just shrugged his shoulders.

"Then you know the way I came from Singen?" I asked him.

"Oh, yes!" he said. "Don't you know it?"

"No!" I answered. "But I would like to learn it."

He took a map and showed me the whole route. My nurse knocked at the door.

"It's time to release her," she said. "She can't stand any more questioning."

The officer agreed.

"Tell Dr. Billeter," he said to her, "that I'm satisfied about keeping her in hospital. She needs it."

So I was returned to the hospital and stayed there another month's time.

I was still very worried about my family in England. A long time had gone by since the friendly welfare officer had sent a telegram on my behalf to Portugal, and I had heard nothing from my sister-in-law or from England. I learned later that it was because it was just the time when the second front was being prepared. All the necessary precautions were being taken—no mail went through from a neutral country to England without many weeks' delay. The first letter from England—from my husband—reached me in August 1944. I had reached Switzerland in April.

By that time I was already out of the hospital. I was in one of the camps, a Swiss camp, a very nice camp, I must say—my doctor saw to that—not an ordinary, big camp. They were terrible. I could understand that. Swiss people couldn't prepare early enough for all the many refugees coming, not only from Germany, but France, Belgium, Italy and so on—I think from all parts of Europe. And they had to cope with such a big number of refugees that they really, at first at least, didn't know what to do. But there were some smaller camps for old or disabled people and mothers with babies, and my doctor got me into one of them. That was nice. It was not very far from Zürich in very lovely surroundings. We were only forty people there, eleven of them were small children with their mothers. None of them were German; most of them Italian, French, or Belgian, with one Czechoslovakian couple—the only ones who spoke German. But we managed quite well together, and our Swiss wardens were extremely kind and nice, so it wasn't a real hardship to live there.

I was particularly fortunate to find in the Commandant a professor of German literature from Zürich University, who had been assigned to this position as part of his military service. He had studied in Leipzig and seemed extremely glad to have the opportunity to talk to me. We became very friendly and I found him always helpful. He left the same day as I did to go back to his work. That was on September 8, 1944. We had a celebration the evening before, where we found our Swiss cook had provided a special supper. Afterwards everybody tried to entertain us by singing one of the songs of his country.

As a refugee myself I had met quite a number of other refugees before I left the hospital. Amongst them were some German people—men who had escaped from the Army. They told me—and they were sincere—they couldn't have stood any longer the things which they had heard and seen in Poland. They said that a number of soldiers tried to escape, and I met three of them who succeeded. But they told me that a number of their comrades had tried to cross with them. The others didn't succeed; they were taken by the Germans, or drowned in trying to swim across the Rhine. Many other things happened to them—they were too exhausted, so they fell by the roadside and died there. Only the strongest could survive, and even they —all three of them—were ill people. They all had bad nerves—they couldn't work—they looked extremely ill, and one of them said, "Quite frankly, I don't know how I shall go on living after all the terrible things I've seen and heard." They had been commanded to bring Jewish people to the gas chambers. They didn't see the last things, but they heard their cries, and they were horrified. They told me about one soldier who refused to do it, and was shot on the spot.

I very often felt a hopeless sorrow sweep over me and, you know, after I had been rescued, and had escaped from Germany, it was very difficult to become accustomed to the view that I, amongst so many millions of people, survived. I could only think there must be some sense in my surviving. I felt it was a great responsibility. The only thing which I then saw was to tell about all the experiences I myself have had—to tell people that life never is black on the one side and white on the other, but that always life is mixed—even in the most

difficult positions. There always are some little things which can help you; there are always kind people who help you to come through terrible moments.

At first I thought I just write, because that was the only thing I could do except to talk to people—to convey what I had experienced. But after a short time some of the refugees living in Schaffhausen became very close friends. And they themselves had friends in Zürich, and they wanted me to make their acquaintance, which I did. Among these was a very nice, intelligent, young woman with a university degree and a very responsible job. She was interested in my story, and she found at once a publisher for the manuscript which I had already written, first just for my husband and my children. It was the best way, I thought, to tell them what had happened during our long separation.

I got a contract, which meant I saved some money—for the first time in Switzerland—and that was in August, 1945. Then in the first days of November, 1945 I saw my book in print, and got the first copies to send to relatives and friends. It was strange to me to see it in print. I didn't want to read it and I didn't—but I knew something worthwhile was accomplished. A bit of the responsibility I had felt all the time had been discharged.

But I must go back to 1944. In September I left the small camp for refugees because I was invited to stay with Pastor Michaëlis in the mountains. Already the train journey in the beginning of September was a real joy. I never had seen the mountains in autumn, and I was so excited by looking at the lovely-coloured trees and the high mountains with a lot of snow on their peaks already. At first the train went along Lake Zürich, and then higher up, deeper into the mountains till we came to Graubünden, not far from the Engadine. Soon I had to change to a bus, on a very narrow road originally made for a mail-coach with horses. We had to climb about 2,500 feet till we reached the little village of Feldis, beautifully situated on a sort of spur with a gigantic view of the surrounding nearly 9,000-foot-high mountains. It was an awful road. I wasn't anxious; I was so excited by the gorgeous view that I didn't think of any danger. At the terminus Pastor Michaëlis

waited for me. He took my luggage and greeted me warm-heartedly.

"I'm sure it's a very different life," he said apologetically, "which we live here from anything you have lived before. I hope it's not too primitive. We are very poor and work very hard. None of us has known wealth."

"That's not going to shock me," I replied. "I hope you will make me work hard too."

"I'm going to get you well first," he said as he looked at me. "But here is my rectory."

One of the larger chalets—original Swiss chalets—was the rectory. The little path between the houses was sheer rocks, but beyond that the lovely meadows and woods spread. And on the horizon I could see the magnificent high mountains around us.

We reached the rectory, and Miss Siebert, an old lady—a friend of his mother's—who kept house for the pastor, came down the two steps to greet me. A nice old face with a kind smile on it. We shook hands and she said, "Welcome here. I'm glad you could come, and I hope you will get well here. Our mountain air has done lots of good to many people before. But now come in; I will show you the house." We went through the little hall to the sitting-room. It was the biggest room of the house, with a large, square green-tiled stove and a narrow bench around it you could sit on and warm your back. It had a square table in the middle and three small windows with a marvellous view again—a very comely room, I thought. Then we went upstairs. There was one guest-room already prepared for me, with a little door to a balcony on one side. It was very sparsely furnished—but the view from the window was so marvellous that the furniture didn't count. Miss Siebert said "I'm afraid we haven't got electric light here; we use candles, but we have an ample supply of them. You have to be careful with them, because everything here is made of wood, and we are very anxious not to have a fire." I assured her I would be very careful. "Now come downstairs; we will have some tea."

Soon I could help her in the household and I could do more outside. The pastor had got from the farmers of the village eight pieces of ground. We had to grow our own potatoes and vegetables; we were too poor to buy these things. He had one acre

for growing potatoes; the other pieces were much smaller. The smallest one was a herb garden—parsley, chives, onions, and dill. In another one berries grew—the largest red currants I've ever seen. You couldn't grow wheat or barley or oats there; it was much too high up; but cabbages, carrots, beetroot, beans, sprouts and so on grew well. They all needed weeding, and I at once went to work on them. Miss Siebert was very grateful that I did this—the pastor had many other things to do—so that was one thing where I could help. But there was enough spare time to go on writing my book. I told the pastor and Miss Siebert about it and they were very interested.

I soon made the acquaintance of the other inhabitants of the village—friendly people. They had a hard life altogether. I was surprised how many languages they could talk. They had a sort of Latin which is one of the official languages of Switzerland; they could speak Italian, French, German—the Swiss German as well as our normal German—and many of them tried to learn English as well. They bred cattle—very fine cattle—but to get the hay and the grass for the cattle was an enormous, hard job. In early spring the cattle grazed on the lower meadows; when summer came they went higher and higher up; but in between all the meadows had to be mown and made into hay for the winter. Most of these meadows were on such steep slopes that the men mowing them had to rope themselves to avoid falling down. And to get the hay, they used large sheets of cotton or linen to put it in, and had to carry it on their backs down into the village. Besides that, they earned some extra money by letting their rooms to tourists during high summertime, but that was only about two months—July and August. Before and after that the climate was too rough.

The village school had only one class—twenty-five children in it—and a young teacher taught them. There was more work to do for Miss Siebert and myself; we taught the little girls songs and folk-dances. We prepared the festivals when they came, rehearsed little sketches or plays with them—a work I had always loved. Soon I was a sort of member of the village to them, living their life with them, as primitive and poor as they all were. But it was a healthy and beautiful life, and I shall

never forget how early in October I started to help to get out our potatoes—I'd never done that before; but I learned quickly. The only difficulty was that my leg still hurt and, on the steep slope on which our potato acre lay, I had difficulty keeping my balance. But I learned that, and though my back and my leg ached after a day's work, I knew it was nice work and useful and I liked doing it.

In the beginning of November I had an accident with the index finger of my left hand; I cut myself with a bread-knife—only a little cut, but after three days it was swollen and apparently festered. The whole arm hurt very much, and the pastor said, "You must go down to the hospital at Chur." As the bus goes only till the 1st of November, I had to walk down. It snowed as I left the rectory, and it started to rain when I got further down. It took me long hours of a very painful walk, but presently I reached the station and took the train the rest of the way to Chur and the hospital. I was told there that I had to wait, as the surgeon was operating. My teeth chattered and I felt very unwell. After I had waited quite a long time, a nurse came in and saw me.

"What are you doing here?" she asked me kindly.

I told her, and she said, "But you are feverish. You can't sit out here. I'm going to get you a bed."

"No, you can't," I replied. "I must go back to Feldis today. I've brought nothing with me. I just want my finger cut."

She was not satisfied. She looked at my finger and said "This is not a simple cut. You come with me. I'll get you a bed and all you need. You can be grateful if you go back to your village by Christmas."

I was horrified. But she was right. It turned out that the bone was infected already, and it took a long time to get me better. On the other hand, I was again lucky, because Dr. Becker, the surgeon, examined my whole body, and when he saw my leg he asked about that. I told him, and he said, "We'll have to get some X-rays; I'm not satisfied that there's nothing to be done now." The operation on my fibula had been quite successful, but at that time nobody had seen that my tibia was cracked in the joint, and that was why I couldn't move the foot and

why it hurt so much. Dr. Becker in Chur now started to work on that. I had really good treatment there and he succeeded in the months I had to stay in hospital in getting the leg well, so that I would walk fairly normally again. In January I went back to the village—this time not on foot. My pastor, who had visited me fairly often, arranged for a sort of horse carriage for the first part of the journey, and then a sledge for the last part.

The winter there was a very hard time; there was no water supply from November to the end of May; it was frozen. We had to go to the next running well with buckets to get our water, and I still remember when I tried to get my bucket full up I always slipped and by the time I got home only a little trickle was left. I never learned how to do this properly—the pastor was much better at that and he had to get our main supply. My room had no stove—I got the outside temperature in it, and every morning it was hard to get up out of my fairly warm bed to go down. The water in my jug was frozen solid, and I couldn't use it. But Miss Siebert very kindly told me to wash in the kitchen, which was a bit warmer than the outside temperature. And then quickly I slipped into the sitting-room (the pastor was in his study upstairs), went to the stove, and behind the little curtains there dressed and got warm. The stove was heated only by wood—large, large logs of larch wood. This was the only luxury—we were never short of wood. We could heat this room extremely well. The pastor's study just above it was heated through a hole in the ceiling of the sitting-room which was left open just above the stove. The heat went up there and he found it warm enough to work there.

In September '45 I got a job as a social worker in Zürich. The Swiss Workers' Rescue Organisation cared for political refugees, and I, a member of the German Social-Democratic party and wife of a Prussian M.P., was looked on as a political refugee and had become one of its charges. They were marvellous people, and helped in a splendid way. At the end of the war Switzerland founded a rescue organisation to help people in war-damaged Europe. The last country to get its support was Germany. The State organisation, to save time and money, did the general administrative and financial work—its offices in Berne were the headquarters, the collecting centre for all sorts

of goods and money. The great private welfare organisations were asked to do the executive work, to make the plans for children's homes, youth training centres, issues of food supplies for schoolchildren, and all that kind of thing. The Workers' Rescue Organisation offered its help. Its Executive Committee thought that I, who had left Germany as late as I did—in 1944—would be able to plan with proper knowledge, and include all the things necessary for rescue work, mainly feeding schoolchildren and babies. That was my job, they could point out, and no Swiss person could do as well. Otherwise I, as a refugee, would not have got permission for such qualified work. I loved doing it, and I believe it would have hardly been possible for someone who had not lived in Germany till so near the end of the war, even if not till the very end, to know what was needed to be sent there—from ladles and saucepans to the last small ingredient for a meal. I stayed in that work until it was possible to get to England.

TWELVE

REUNION

You know, England didn't want too many refugees to come over at once, so they made quite a number of conditions, and these conditions were published in, I think, late November 1945. They said that only displaced persons, and even then the nearest relatives only—that meant husbands or wives, children or parents—were allowed to come. It was not at all sure that I was a displaced person—I had displaced myself; but when I went to the British General Consulate in Zürich the Consul himself was so impressed that I got not only money by publishing a book, but a very good job as well, that he said at once, "Oh yes, I see. You are a displaced person. We will give you a visa. You can get over there as quickly as you can arrange." Though that was in January 1946, I could only leave Switzerland on the 3rd of March and even that was very early. The funny thing I discovered was that to get the French visa would take so long that the British visa would already not be valid any more! So there was only the one thing—to fly—and it was a peculiar thing to get from Zürich to London in three hours' time. The plane landed in a snowstorm. We had left Zürich in a lovely, springy morning, but the nearer we came to London the worse the weather got, and the people at the Airport in London were not at all sure we could land. But we could. My husband and my two children met me there, and that was a moment I shall never forget in my life. I think it made up for a lot of difficulties and worries before that.

When I left the plane I just had to walk over to them. We couldn't say anything. We embraced, and what mattered was that as a family we were together again. My son only had two days' leave from his work, and my daughter only got the one day off as a nurse, but that gave us some hours when we could talk together. I don't know what we talked about—I have forgotten that. I know only that we were happy, and that there were no barriers to our feeling near to each other,

though so many years had elapsed. I found my husband so ill that I thought I was just in time to see him die. But he recovered, miraculously really. Nobody thought he would, but he did.

I must say that it was not easy to find a place for us to live together in post-war London, where so much had been destroyed. One of the conditions on which I had been allowed to come to England was that I would not require extra accommodation. Fritz had been living in a refugee hostel, run by the Quakers, but he was not happy there. The other refugees thought of nothing but the past. Perhaps it was more glamorous in their memories than it had really been. But it was unendurable to Fritz, for he was ill and needed quiet. I could have lived there, but he wanted to move. Then we found that a room had become free at our cousin's in North London. I thought the Aliens Police might refuse us permission to rent it. But, you know, we could get a report from the doctor, saying that Fritz ought to have quiet and special nursing, and the police made no objections. So we went there, and it was a very good thing.

For nearly two years we lived together in London, and we lived through every day knowing it was a special thing to be together again. We didn't take it for granted. In December 1947 Fritz died . . . so suddenly that the doctor found him already dead when he came. It was the kind of death he had wished to die—no long illness, no knowing what would happen—I had to be grateful. He was nearly seventy-four, and the years of our separation were, I am sure, for him even more difficult than they were for me. His was a passive sort of life to live through, and I think it is more difficult than the active life I had had to live. Thinking back, I am quite certain that all the experiences I went through gave me in a sort of way a full, rich life. Without them I don't think I ever would have learnt what I really tried to learn and to practise.

My first months in England were spent on nursing Fritz back to health. It was a very good thing that we did not have to worry about money. I had saved part of my salary in Switzerland, and I had the royalties of my book. They were enough for us. You know, it was the first time after thirteen years that we

were free to enjoy unperturbed a simple and good life together. Our children were making their way. Peter was now trained, and had a job in Worcestershire. Hanna was a State-registered nurse, and was taking training in midwifery. This she did at a London hospital, so she could spend her spare time with us. From Gustel we had regular letters, and photos showing her, her husband and her two sons.

Peter was engaged to Ursula Simon, who had trained as a nurse with Hanna, and on June 1, 1946, we were all present at their wedding. We met their friends, and Ursula's sister and her husband. They were refugees in their early twenties. It was exciting to me to see how they had really found new roots, new occupations, new friends. You know, my heart went out to them, full of joy and thankfulness, that the terrible things which the Nazis had done had not been able to destroy their lives. It was a wonderful thing, really.

THIRTEEN

PRISON WORK AGAIN

My husband did not want to lose contact with the refugee organisation of the Quakers, and especially with Miss Fowler, the kind lady who had been in charge of the hostel in Hertfordshire where he had lived before I came to England. We went to see her in Bloomsbury House, and I was glad to find that she had read my book, and that she could speak German. For my English was still very bad. I had not spoken it since I learned it at school. She asked me if I had any plans about work, and I told her I could not yet speak English well enough to try to find something. So she said to me that she thought she knew of work I would be able to do, and would be fitted to do, if I was willing to try. Then she told us that the Foreign Office arranged lectures for prisoners of war in their different camps. "There," she said, "your German would be an essential factor. I'm told that very few women are chosen, but I think that women can do special work in re-education. Would you be willing to try?"

I said that I certainly would, and asked how I should get more details and apply. She told me to write it in German, which she would translate for me, and then forward with her recommendation. She said it would help if it was forwarded by a known social worker. She told me that she would have to have a full statement of how I had spent all the time from the beginning of the war to the time I arrived in England. I would have to give dates and addresses. Fortunately, I could do that. I have a good memory. Miss Fowler sent in my application at the beginning of June 1946. We had become very good friends, and I still am in touch with her. Summer and autumn passed, and I did not get a reply. I thought I had not been found suitable. Then on December the 20th I was called to an interview.

I found a smiling official who, to my relief, offered to speak German. You know, I was very excited, and so my English was worse than usual, which is saying a lot!

"I feel I must explain," he told me, "why it has taken so many months to answer your application. But when a person has such a fantastic life as yours has been during these years, it takes even Scotland Yard a long time to prove the truth of it. But now we know that we can trust you. I suggest you tell the prisoners about your experiences under the Nazis."

"I do not agree to that," I replied. "For I have had the opportunity to talk to some of the refugees who are lecturing in the prisoner of war camps. They all have told me about prisoners' reactions when they have been shown films from the concentration camps, and told about the mass murders done by Hitler and all that sort of thing. They don't believe it's true. They think it is just Allied propaganda."

I could see that he did not quite agree with me, so I asked him: "Is it true that the lectures are voluntary?"

"Yes," he said. "The prisoners do not have to come."

"Well," I replied, "when they see my Jewish name, and the subject on which I am going to talk, I do not think anybody will come."

"But," he asked me, "whatever subject would you propose to lecture on?"

"I will talk about juvenile delinquency and the rehabilitation of young prisoners!" I said. "These men are prisoners, though they are not criminals. They will understand what prisoners feel. And, you know, I am sure they will understand that in Germany even more than in other war-damaged countries, there is more juvenile crime than before the war, and more need of re-education. It is a field I know, and I am sure I can hold their interest."

I could see he was impressed. He nodded his agreement. "Its a good subject," he said, "but I suggest a compromise. Will you give five minutes to introduce yourself, telling them about your life since 1933, and watching their reactions?"

"Yes," I agreed. "Of course I am willing to do that."

"Good," he said. "Then let's get down to practical details."

And I found I was expected to give as much time to lecturing as I could find. He told me how all the arrangements would be made, all the tickets provided and the hotel booked, and he wanted me to start early in January. All this had taken a long

time, and my husband was waiting for me outside. But he was as excited as I was at this new work to do, and during the next few days we discussed every side of it and how I should do it—and how I should get to the place where I had to do it with my bad English. With the help of Fritz and a large dictionary I tried to compose a guide for myself, which covered all the necessary questions, phrases, and expressions I would need during the journey, in hotels and with the English officials in the camps. Then, early in January 1947, I set out for a week's lecturing in camps in the north of England.

The prisoners were mostly working in farms. To the main camp belonged a number of hostels, and the prisoners lived sometimes in Nissen huts, sometimes in barracks, sometimes in old country houses. Under the British Commandant, there was a German prisoner as camp leader in the main camp. I had to send in a report on each lecture, saying how many men had come to it, how they took what I said, and what questions they asked. I learned later that the British Commandant and the German camp leader also had to send in reports. So, I think, the Foreign Office could discover whether I was a good lecturer or not.

From the beginning I was surprised at the number of men who came. You know, I think they were curious, because in many places it was the first time a German woman came to talk to them. I was at least entertainment in a dull life. I used to start by telling them I was a Jewess and a Socialist, and that if anybody wanted to leave because of that I would not mind. Nobody ever did. I went on to mention just the main facts of my life from 1939, how we tried to emigrate, my staying behind after the war began, life in the ghetto, then underground, my escape into Switzerland, and finally my reunion with my family in England.

I told all that quite unemotionally, I was as matter of fact as I could be. I said to them that I had told them this because I was quite unknown to them, and this was a sort of introduction. Then I went on to my real subject. I made most of it of practical examples. I tried to make them see prisoners as real persons, with different problems. I showed how some could be helped back to their place in human society, so that

they would not be looked at as an unwanted outsider, or even an outlaw. I said that to be an outlaw was to be something dreaded by all normal human beings. Then I told them that I failed with others, and said what I thought was the reason. They were soon interested: I could see that. I had been afraid my voice would not easily be heard by such a big crowd—600 to 800 men filling a whole large Nissen hut. Then many of them were smoking, and in 1947 they did not have the best kind of tobacco in their cigarettes and pipes. I should not have worried. They kept completely quiet, and told me afterwards they could hear me clearly.

I remember that after I had finished my first lecture some questions about prison work followed, which I tried to answer. Then one man cautiously said: "Would you mind when I asked you something from your experiences during your last years in Germany? Don't answer if its too painful for you. But I am quite certain that not only I but many of my comrades would be extremely grateful if we were allowed to ask questions, and to discuss frankly with you, what until now we have only discussed in our own small groups." You can imagine that I agreed wholeheartedly.

He started at once, and many others followed with questions about antisemitism, about the concentration camps, asking whether the horrors told and shown in films were really true, and everything they could think of. I learned next day, after a lecture in a smaller hostel, that it was the camp leader who had started the questions. He was a theologian. He accompanied me to the hostel and we talked during the drive. We and other interested prisoners talked more still after the lectures. In the main camp we had to finish at ten o'clock. In the hostels it did not matter. In this first tour I learned two important things: first, to tell the prisoners I would answer questions about my personal experiences as well as about the subject of the lecture, and, secondly, to ask for a door key to my hotel. On that first evening, the camp leader, and my driver (also a prisoner) had a dreadful time, knocking and ringing the bell, before I could get into my hotel.

It was clear to me from this beginning that talks, after lecture and general discussion had ended, were very important.

I could then meet a smaller circle with the most interested men, very often in the kitchen-hut. There had to be much more discipline in the main camps with, perhaps, 1,000 men. In the hostels it could be a social gathering and, already during the week, I learned many interesting details about a prisoner's life, about his work and his spare-time activities. More important still, they told me about their contact with English people in the neighbourhood of the camps. This could be very important indeed.

One moving story I shall not forget. It began with the parish priest of a village near a hostel inviting the prisoners to the services in his church. Many went regularly, and were deeply moved by their kindly welcome from the villagers. Then at Christmas, 1946, English people were officially allowed to invite prisoners to their homes. All the men in the hostel not only got an invitation and gladly accepted it, but found they were treated as cherished guests. Afterwards they were allowed to go to see their English friends on Sunday afternoons. Then villagers started sending parcels to the families of the prisoners in Germany—it was much greater help, perhaps, than the English sender realised. You know, the men realised that their families were starving, but they could do nothing themselves. The camp leader went on, after the men had told me all this story, to tell me of the way they planned to show their gratitude.

The little church had beautiful stained-glass windows, except one which had plain glass. Among the prisoners was a talented glass-painter. He had made a beautiful design of St. Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, who had come from England, and so was a symbol and a bridge between the two nations. They had got permission to change their special camp money into English money, and to pay for a firm to make the window. It was to be completed and dedicated at Easter, as a surprise to the villagers. Later I was sent a copy of the camp newspaper with a picture of it, and a lively description of its dedication.

Let me anticipate here my later experiences. I heard many stories of the good connections between the prisoners and the English population in their neighbourhood. I was told of the men's gratitude to the families who let them forget their worries and the hardships of prison for a few hours. In some

larger towns prisoners were invited to attend Council meetings, and to bring their choirs, orchestras or bands to special occasions. The prisoners in many camps told me that they had been prepared to find the English treat them as enemies who had fought against them, or even to be full of hate. But they were accepted as human beings, in need of special kindness because they were prisoners. This had been a great surprise to them, and a gift for which they showed their gratitude in many ways. Friendships lasted after the prisoners had gone home. It was a good foundation for mutual understanding, I think.

It was some weeks before I was called on again, and this gave me the opportunity to discuss it all with my husband. He was very interested. It was much more than that. He could give me the best support possible, and became more and more involved in my activities. We talked together about my experiences, and he gave me much good advice. Then another factor helped not to make it a period of separation. My lectures were after work, in the evening. I had the day free. When I had written my official report, I would write a long letter to Fritz about the previous evening. He was always kept up to date, and every day he wrote back.

Soon he became still more a partner. The camp leader in the first camp had asked me whether he and others might write to me. Of course I said, "Yes." After that I always left my private address in places I visited. But I never expected so many letters to come. Fritz answered them all instead of me. They were very interesting documents. As they were written by men I did not know, I must say they were surprisingly frank and entirely honest. Perhaps my not knowing them made it easy for them to write confidentially to a stranger who would not be likely to meet them again.

Already in Switzerland, though it was so near to the German border, I had learned that the Swiss people had no real notion of the daily life of the mass of the Germans. They read in their newspapers, and were informed on the radio, of the atrocities in concentration camps and the mass murders of the Nazis. That the Nazis deliberately set out to keep the German population ignorant about the actual terrible happenings, that all who had directly to do with them were sworn to silence,

that everybody knew it could be fatal to ask questions—who knew all this beyond the frontiers of Germany? I know it was possible for those who were deeply concerned when a Jewish friend was deported—evacuated to work in Poland was the official term—to find out eventually that it meant death in many cases. But it was never easy, and sometimes it was not possible. Even Uncle Karl, for example, who wanted to know the truth, could not get it, and asked me about it. That was in the winter of 1942, when the war was already beginning to go badly for Germany. So I was sure that most of the prisoners were really ignorant of what had happened when they asked me questions.

In the Army, perhaps, they did not even really know what it was like for their own families living at home. The population had to face hardships of every kind. Fear and distrust surrounded them like a tight net. The heavy air raids were quite exhausting. Who, with these burdens, had the courage and the moral strength to care what happened to those who suddenly disappeared? To care meant to help others, who perhaps would be made to disappear tomorrow. Nobody could be in doubt that, if he did this, he would risk his life and the lives of his family. Who of us could honestly declare himself to be ready to do it under all circumstances? And yet many did do it. I had myself experienced it again and again. I felt bound to bear witness of this. I did it in Switzerland. I had done it in my book. I had to do it in England, and I certainly talked about it to the prisoners.

Looking back over the thirteen or fourteen months I was going to the camps, I can scarcely think of one where the question did not occur. "Was it really true," I was asked again and again, "that millions of Jews were murdered?" I had to answer: "Yes. Millions of Jews, Christians, Socialists, and many courageous people who resisted the Nazi crimes and tried to help. I don't know how many millions died a horrible death in the Nazi terror." In 1947 more exact numbers were not known to me. The men who asked this question were sincere. They did not know. The ones who knew—and there certainly were some—kept silent. They would not have asked me questions about it. In the scores of letters from men unknown to me I

was told again and again that "Because of your telling us that many Germans did help, I am sure you spoke the truth about the terrible murders. I did not want to believe it. I could not imagine that it did really happen. Now I must believe it." Living in one furnished room, we could not keep all the letters. When my husband had answered them, they were destroyed.

I made twenty-six long journeys from London, going south, east, north and west. I saw a great deal of the country, and I took with me an ancient Baedeker Fritz had brought with him. It dated from 1895! I saw castles and great houses, cathedrals and churches, and I sent cards, where I could, to Fritz to share my experience with him. I travelled in every kind of military vehicle, from the Commandant's car to ambulance, lorry and jeep. Once my driver, a nice, mild and not uneducated lad, drove me three times slowly round a cathedral so that I could at least see it well from outside.

Because of my bad English, I was always afraid I wouldn't get to the place where I was meant to go, but it always went well. I found people in the train very helpful; they always told me when to get off, or where to change. I believe that I learned a lot, because I just had to talk English in the trains as well as in the hotels or with the English commandant or interpreter in the camps. It may sound funny that I had to talk English to an interpreter, but that was the regulation, even if he was a German refugee in the British Army. But I had experienced how to cope with the unexpected before that when I went into the ghetto. I had to prepare the main meal of 320 people, which I never had done before. I'd just had to cook for my own family. But if you must, you learn these things.

In the main camps I very often met the commandant before or after my lecture. Very often he showed me round. The prisoners kept their own kitchen, they did their own cooking, and I found that fairly often the English staff was not only interested in German cooking, but wanted to take part in it. When I was shown around, the commandant told me with pride how nicely the prisoners kept the surroundings of their huts. There were flower-beds, and in one camp I found a nicely arranged rock-garden, and on top of it a beautifully made model of a Black Forest farmhouse. In another camp I was shown

with pride a little exhibition of all the things the prisoners had made in their spare time. From old cars, which they were allowed to dismantle, they had taken leather from the seats and made handbags and receptacles out of it; they had taken metal parts and made lovely vases, kettles and pots. You found all sorts of things—painted pictures with nice frames, all of it made by the prisoners. There was never any difficulty for the English staff to make the prisoners keep the camp tidy and nice-looking, and I was glad that it was always appreciated.

I would like to tell two nice episodes. In one camp the prisoners worked in a sugar factory. They told me how they had found old sugar sacks encrusted thickly with sugar. They had to clean the sacks and didn't want to let the precious sugar be washed away. Carefully they took it out, scraped the bags and brought it all back to their camp, because no one wanted this sugar. In the camp they had met a nice old gentleman, a Quaker, who very kindly had told them that if they needed something special, he would try to get it for them.

"Could you get us," they asked him, "several pounds of cocoa?"

"Why?" he asked with surprise. "Can't you get it in your little shop in the camp?"

"We can't get enough," they replied. "We want it for a special purpose, but we don't want to tell you what that is. When we've finished what we want to do, we'll show you. After that we'll try to pay for it."

"You needn't do that," said the old gentleman. "Would 10 lb. be enough?"

He could offer to get them this because cocoa was not rationed. You need sugar to drink it, and the sugar was rationed.

The old gentleman got permission from the Commandant, brought the 10 lb., and the prisoners went to work. They had formed moulds from old tins. They heated the cocoa together with the sugar, poured it into the moulds, and in this way made chocolate—a very precious, very scarce thing at that time, when we had so few sweet coupons. When the thing worked well, they showed him what they had done.

"If you like to sell this chocolate to your friends," they told

him, "it will pay for the cocoa and perhaps buy us some more. We get sugar-encrusted sacks almost every day."

"That is a splendid idea," he replied with a smile. "There are plenty of people who will like to have it. What about your own families in Germany?"

"No," said the prisoners. "We are not allowed to send them parcels." "Oh!" said the old gentleman. "We can do that. We will send them some chocolate and other things as well."

It was all quite legal, and it was useful to everybody.

Another little episode: One evening I was waiting for the car to take me to one of the more distant hostels. The German camp leader had told me that he wanted to come with me. It was past the time for him to come, and I didn't know whether he had forgotten to come or what had happened. I was just at the point of telephoning when the car drove up. I went out and the camp leader said, "I must apologise, but just when I wanted to come, our Commandant called me. I must tell you what he wanted. Yesterday—Sunday—he was standing at the window of his room watching us going out to our English hosts, and he told me that he was very surprised to see our fine shoes.

" 'I'm quite sure,' he said, turning to me, 'they weren't English Army shoes. I'm not asking you officially, but can you tell me how you get them?'

" 'Yes, sir,' I answered. 'You know we work here as dustmen for the town. In the dustbins my comrades find shoes of every kind. They all need repairs, but often not much.'

" 'That's all right,' said the Commandant. 'But how can you repair them? Where do you get the material from?'

" 'We get it easily, sir,' I said. 'Some of us are farm-workers, and we find abandoned cars in the fields. We are allowed to dismantle them, and so get either leather or rubber for our repairs. We have our cobblers in the camp, and in their spare time they repair the shoes from the dustbins. If they are women's and children's shoes, our English friends send them to our families in Germany.'

" 'Thank you for telling me,' said the Commandant with a smile. 'If you can do that, I think that when you get back you will be able to rebuild Germany, however badly it has been bombed.' "

After February 1948 all the prisoners were collected together to prepare for their going home. Quite a number of them took the opportunity to stay on in England as free farm-workers, who were badly needed. All the others went home.

When the prisoners had gone home, my work naturally came to an end. I did not try for other work, but went to live with my family.

FOURTEEN

"PORT AFTER STORMIE SEAS"

I FIRST WENT TO LIVE with my son and my daughter-in-law in Worcestershire, where his work was. My oldest granddaughter, Ruth, had been born in the summer before, and my husband had had the joy to see his little granddaughter. For some lovely days we had all been able to stay together. In the autumn of 1948 our younger daughter married David Cooper, who was a research engineer in Dunlops. As she was still required to work as a Health Visitor, I went to Birmingham, where they were going to live, to keep house for them. There two grandchildren arrived in due course—Miriam born in '51, Stephen in '53. And in my son's family there followed three others, Gillian, John and Paul. The youngest is nearly three years old while I am telling this.

At the end of the summer of 1952 I got the assurance from the German Government that I would receive my widow's pension, and a lump sum to cover the never-paid salary and pension of my husband. That enabled me to go back to Germany. I wanted to go back to Bavaria, if possible to the little village, Icking, near Munich, where our family had spent some of our last years in Germany together. I knew the lump sum could help me either to buy a flat in Munich itself or to get a small house, a bungalow, in this little village.

It turned out like a sort of fairy tale. The friend who had bought the house in Icking where we had first lived was ready to let me have one part of her large grounds in order to build a bungalow on it. I couldn't pay for the ground as well as for the building of the little house, so we both agreed that I should rent the land. We didn't want a fence between us, and we both were extremely careful to plan where the bungalow should be built so that the view from her house wouldn't be spoiled, and so that no trees would have to be felled.

I still have this lovely little bungalow, with this friend at the other end of the garden, with her children—five of them—all

of whom I have known since their babyhood. Now they are grown up, all are married or have their own jobs. But all of them from time to time are coming back to spend holidays with their mother and myself. The same applies to my own children. Even my daughter from South America could come with her youngest son to spend a long holiday with me, partly in England, partly in Icking. And the others come for their summer holidays, either to stay in the bungalow—which they all love, especially the grandchildren—or to go on to the beauty spots nearby.

When I went back I started again my prison work. It was badly needed because Hitler had officially stopped this sort of work. I found plenty to do in visiting the one Bavarian prison for juvenile delinquents and first offenders—girls and women. I had to give up this work some years ago; being now over seventy, I can't be as active as I had been. But I've still got a full and rich life, with many friends living in my village of Icking or in Munich, others in other parts of Germany, visiting me in their holidays. And I'm glad I have a nice guest-room so they can stay there. Some of them who helped me in the most difficult years, now live in the Eastern Zone of Germany. For them it was difficult to get the opportunity to spend holidays in the western part of Germany. Now this is no longer possible since the Berlin Wall was built in August '61.

After I had built my little house, I still spent my winters with my family or with friends in England. Two friends especially I look on as a sort of precious inheritance from my husband. After he had lost his job, he became very interested in the history of the Jews, especially in the economic history of the German Jews during the Middle Ages. He had found plenty of material in the state library of Munich. When he went to England he found material in the libraries of Oxford and later on of London. When I arrived in England, he told me about a book which had interested him extremely—*The Jew and His Neighbour*, by James Parkes. Long parts of it he read to me in German translation. Then in winter, 1946, he found another book by the same author with the title *Anti-Semitism: an Enemy of the People*. He again read long parts of it to me, and we both found it extremely interesting and well written.

I urged Fritz to write to the author; from the experience of my own book I knew that authors are pleased to get appreciative letters. Fritz did, but for a long time he didn't get a reply. Then in the spring of 1947 we got a kind letter telling my husband that he and his wife Dorothy had been in America and had found the letter after their return. James wrote that he had a good many books which might interest my husband. So he invited him for a week-end, because it was not in London where he lived, but near Cambridge. And the letter went on: "If there is a Mrs. Rosenfeld, please bring her with you. I can offer her the company of my wife and the pleasure of my garden." We accepted the invitation, and our friendship was founded. After my husband's death, and after I had moved from London, I spent long weeks in the spring of 1948 with Dorothy and James Parkes. Since then I visit them every year, because I still spend the winter months in England with the two families of Peter and Hanna. Through Dorothy and James I met the senior producer of the Midland BBC—Charles Parker—who recorded my life story for the Midland Home Service. Now I am spending long weeks with these great friends recording more of my life than Charles Parker could include. Without them this book would never have been published. The gratefulness I feel for them I can't express in words.

It took me a very long time really to find that I'm not able any more to have the same active life as I always had before. I needed the feeling I had to work, to work, to work! I can't do it now. I've settled down to that. Now I live without any special kind of work, just doing what I can do without getting ill, and living for people—coming in to see me, to talk to me. They share my meals if they happen to be there, but mainly they come to talk to me, and I talk to them, letting them feel that I felt what they felt. I try to forget my own things, and to live with them, with their troubles, with their everyday problems and all that. That's what I'm doing now, and I've found it's a very good thing. I don't want any more than that now. I'm quite satisfied with this sort of life as long as it goes on, and I think that not fearing death, but taking it as something that will come, helps too. I think of death as a friend. I am not

afraid of it; I'm even not afraid of dying. It might be painful but I've got through such a lot of different pains during my life that I don't fear that.

You know, I can't imagine—I must say I never could—how life after death will go on; I think no one who is truthful can really imagine it, and I believe we are not meant to imagine it. But what helps us is to see all the miracles we take too much for granted! I now find I'm seeing them as miracles and finding all these miracles in everyday life. It's a great thing; you see life from a higher point I think. Take spring; take the ground covered with snow, cold, bare, nothing living on the ground there, and then suddenly the snow melting. Not long after that, little green shoots coming out, flowers. How can a green shoot suddenly have a little flower of quite a different colour? We don't think enough about that, we don't wonder enough about it. All these things are suddenly very alive to me. So are little children developing. I always loved little children. I told you, I think, that I had seven younger brothers and sisters. It wasn't always very easy, as I very often had to cope with them, and I had other things in my mind which I wanted to do. But I always loved them, and I know that when another one was born, and I told my schoolmates about it, they all said, "How awful! Another one! Lots more work for you to do." Then I replied, "I never have thought of that. I'm very glad another one is born, I love to see how they grow."

You know, I think if you try in your own little circle with your children—because it starts with children—to love them and made them love all the people around them, try to let them see that they have to take the consequences of their doings fairly early, and be strict about that—strict, but never forgetting to let them feel that you do that out of your love for them. If you try to do that with small children, I'm quite sure they will respond. They will try to live up to your expectations, to see you as a sort of example which they want to follow.

My father and my Jewish relatives . . . they loved me so very much that I wanted to become just as they were, and I think this has never left my imagination through my whole life.

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follow: but only one permit arrived (at the last moment) and, at Elsbeth's insistence, he left to look after the children.

" Meanwhile Elsbeth had taken the fantastic step of persuading a rabbi in Berlin that, though she had no intention of abandoning the Christian religion, yet he should register her as a member of the Jewish 'racial' community, so that she could share, and possibly alleviate, their lot. For she had very unusual experience in many kinds of social work, and knew that there were many fields in which her knowledge and understanding could be of the greatest help.

" Leaving Berlin, she settled in the Jewish community of Munich, and was soon working in the ghetto established by the Nazis for Jews and Jewesses in a Catholic convent. The kindness and sympathy of the sisters was always ready to help, where it was possible. Finally Elsbeth was so exhausted that she realised that she could no longer be of service—she had been found out too often in evading the cruel orders of the Nazis—and her doctor helped her to go underground.

" There followed nearly two years of terrifying existence, moving continuously from place to place, in perpetual danger of exposure, and yet discovering how many among the German population would risk their own lives to help those whom the Nazis persecuted. She moved gradually nearer and nearer to the Swiss frontier, until finally she was able to cross it, collapsing with a broken leg in a Swiss frontier station in the pitch darkness of a spring night of 1944. After some months in hospital, she was back at her social work among the refugees in Switzerland—a privilege very rarely granted by the Swiss.

" It was not until March 1946 that the family was reunited in London, but almost immediately the Foreign Office asked her to take up the task, at which nobody up to that moment had succeeded, of making the German prisoners of war in the British Isles

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know some of the real facts about the Nazi regime's treatment of Jews and others. For more than a year she travelled all over the British Isles, lecturing in prisoner of war camps, and at the same time doing social work, where need arose, among the prisoners.

" Her husband died in London in December 1947, and in 1952 she was able to return to Germany and to build herself a little house at Icking, among her Bavarian friends. She now spends half the year there, still doing some social work, and half the year she spends with her children and grandchildren in England. She is in her seventies."

If Dr. Rosenfeld's narrative did no more than tell that story, it would be poignant enough. But what is so remarkable about it is the spirit of the narrator. She writes: " One thing my husband and I from the first moment onwards were agreed upon was that no hatred and bitterness should come into our feeling. We knew that hatred and bitterness were negative things." She expresses no hatred for even the worst of the Nazis, though what they did makes her furiously angry. And again: " I think that fear is one of the worst things that people can have. If you can get them free of fear that's one of the great things—if you can make them *see* that they can overcome fear . . . Love is the great thing to overcome fear and to stop to hate. You know, I never succeeded with quite a number of people to see it like that but some of them did and I know it helped them."

She brings out, too, the goodness and courage of many ordinary Germans who dared to show kindness to her: her grocer and milkman in Berlin; the lawyer who defended her husband and the judge who interceded for him; the railway porter who helped her when she was saying good-bye to her husband and offered her shelter in his home; the coal merchant who gave her free coal; the Mother Superior. There were, she says, 100,000 refugees in hiding in Germany—and it took at least ten Germans to sustain one person underground. She lays stress, too, on the fact that the majority of Germans did *not* know about the horrors of the concentration camps. Not that the book is an apologia for the Germans: she also describes Germans who were strongly pro-Nazi, and who were mean and cruel. But those who still indict " the Germans " are quietly and effectively answered in what must surely be one of the most inspiring documents of our time.